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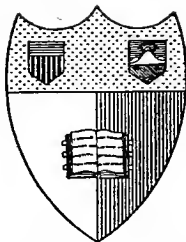
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W. J. M. S. S.

A LIFE OF  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

BY

WILLIAM J. ROLFE, LITT.D.



LONDON: DUCKWORTH AND CO.,

3 HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C.

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## PREFACE

THE manuscript of this *Life* was finished, except for the Notes, in May, 1901, and from the beginning of June to the middle of September was kept in a Safety Vault at Cambridge. In October it mysteriously disappeared from my library. Though I had little doubt by whom it was taken, the evidence was purely circumstantial; and for that and other reasons it was impossible for me to make any effort to regain possession of it. The person who took it intended, after reading it, to return it without betraying himself, but he was afterwards tempted to put it into other hands with a false statement of its history, possibly with a view to its being utilized, in part if not as a whole, in print. This can hardly be done with safety, but it has complicated the affair and interfered with the return of the manuscript in time for it to go to press as promised.

I have therefore been compelled to undertake the depressing task of rewriting it, and the present volume is the result. Whether it is better for being a twice-told tale I cannot say, but I am inclined to think it is no worse. My aim has been to give the main facts, traditions, and conjectures concerning Shakespeare's personal and literary history, adding, so far as my limits allow, the evidence for the facts and the reasons for accepting

or rejecting the traditions and conjectures. Biographers have never agreed, and probably never will agree, on many of these doubtful or disputed matters. I have endeavoured to be fair in stating theories and opinions which I feel obliged to criticize, generally letting their authors or advocates speak for themselves, and leaving the reader to judge whether they are right or I am.

My indebtedness to Halliwell-Phillipps is acknowledged on almost every page, and is even greater than is explicitly recognized. He sent me the successive editions of his *Outlines*, and we discussed many points in them by correspondence. In the prefaces to the latest editions he mentions five persons by name to whom his "gratitude" for "substantial corrections" is "restricted," and of these I happen to be the only one in this country.

To Mr. Sidney Lee's more recent *Life of Shakespeare* I have also been indebted, though I have sometimes had to disagree with him, particularly on the history and interpretation of the *Sonnets*.

Shakespeare's *Poems* (aside from the *Sonnets*) have received comparatively slight attention from his biographers and editors. In my edition of his works I attempted to treat them as thoroughly as the plays, and I have followed the same course here, quoting freely from the few critics who, to my thinking, have done justice to the real merit and interest of these early poetical productions, which have been quite overshadowed by the author's later and greater achievements in dramatic art.

In the Bibliography, which is necessarily a brief selection from material that would fill a volume larger than this, I have given a fuller account of the typographical peculiarities of the first folio than I have seen elsewhere.

It will suffice, I think, to prove beyond all question that the folio could not have been edited by Bacon, as the "cranks" — I cannot call them critics — who believe him to be the author of the plays have assumed, making it, indeed, the corner-stone of their crazy hypothesis.

W. J. R.

*Cambridge, April 23, 1902.*





THIS life was written as a supplement to the New Century (subscription) Edition of "Shakespeare," and for this reason has not been hitherto available as an independent work. As neither time nor care was spared on the preparation for its original appearance, no addition or alteration has been deemed necessary or advisable.

The portrait of Doctor Rolfe was prepared for the book as first published, but he declined to permit its insertion. It is with extreme reluctance that he yields to the request of the publishers that it may appear in the present edition.



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# LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE

## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY

MORE than one biographer of Shakespeare has begun by quoting what George Steevens wrote somewhat more than a hundred years ago: "All that is known with any degree of certainty concerning Shakespeare is, that he was born at Stratford-on-Avon; married and had children there; went to London, where he commenced actor and wrote poems and plays; returned to Stratford, made his will, died, and was buried." And Tennyson is reputed to have said that "the world should be thankful that there are but five facts absolutely known to us about Shakespeare: the date of his birth, April 23, 1564; his marriage at nineteen to Anne Hathaway; his connection with the Globe theatre and with Blackfriars; his retirement from theatrical life, with a competency, to Stratford; and the date of his death, which took place upon the anniversary of his birth, 1616."

It should be understood, however, that there is nothing exceptional in this, though certain folk who deny that Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare have laid much stress upon it. The biographies of the great majority of literary men of that time, especially the dramatists, are as meagre as Shakespeare's or more so. In the latest sketch of the lives of Beaumont and Fletcher (in the "Mermaid Series") the first sentence reads thus: "Beaumont and Fletcher, though not of obscure origin, like the greater number of their fellow dramatists, yet afford no exception to the general rule in the obscurity that surrounds their lives." Those who desire to see "all the scraps of information that can be collected concerning either poet" are referred to Mr. Dyce's introduction to his edition of their works. The volume of the same series devoted to Webster and Tourneur says: "Nothing is known about the lives of John Webster and Cyril Tourneur. We are ignorant where they were born and when they died," etc. The personal history of Marlowe, Massinger, Middleton, and others is much the same.

As I have intimated, this is also true of other great authors than dramatists. Professor Hales begins the introduction to the "Globe" edition of Spenser as follows: "The life of Spenser is wrapt in a similar obscurity to that which hides from us his great predecessor Chaucer, and his still greater contemporary Shakespeare. As in the case of Chaucer, our principal external authorities are

a few meagre entries in certain official documents, and such facts as may be gathered from his works. The birth-year of each poet is determined by inference. The circumstances in which each died are a matter of controversy. What sure information we have of the intervening events of the life of each one is scanty and interrupted;” and so on.

We need not wonder, then, that Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps, in the preface to his *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, compares “the fragments of the personal history of the dramatist which have hitherto been discovered” to “the remains of New Place” (the residence of Shakespeare in his later years), which consist of a few stones and bricks of the foundations, absolutely nothing being left of the structure that rested upon them. He adds: “In this respect the great dramatist participates in the fate of most of his literary contemporaries, for if a collection of the known facts relating to all of them were tabularly arranged, it would be found that the number of the ascertained particulars of his life reached at least the average. At the present day, with biography carried to a wasteful and ridiculous excess, and Shakespeare the idol not merely of a nation but of the educated world, it is difficult to realize a period when no interest was taken in the events of the lives of authors, and when the great poet himself, notwithstanding the immense popularity of some of his works, was held in no general reverence. It must be borne in mind that actors

then occupied an inferior position in society, and that in many quarters even the vocation of a dramatic writer was considered scarcely respectable. The intelligent appreciation of genius by individuals was not sufficient to neutralize in these matters the effect of public opinion and the animosity of the religious world; all circumstances thus uniting to banish general interest in the history of persons connected in any way with the stage. This biographical indifference continued for many years, and long before the season arrived for a real curiosity to be taken in the subject, the records from which alone a satisfactory memoir could have been constructed had disappeared. At the time of Shakespeare's decease, non-political correspondence was rarely preserved, elaborate diaries were not the fashion, and no one, excepting in semi-apocryphal collections of jests, thought it worth while to record many of the sayings and doings, or to delineate at any length the characters, of actors and dramatists, so that it is generally by the merest accident that particulars of interest respecting them have been recovered."

Still, as Karl Elze remarks, "we might have possessed more biographical material relating to Shakespeare, were it not that political and other events combined to destroy what existed. The Civil Wars, Puritanism, and a strange succession of conflagrations, are to blame for having destroyed the few records of Shakespeare's life that had sur-



vived his day. Upon the accession of Charles I. only a few years after Shakespeare's death, and but two years after the publication of his works [in the folio of 1623], the political affairs of the country assumed so serious and threatening an aspect that all other considerations were thrust into the background — more especially everything connected with the drama, which, as is well known, was one of the first things attacked by the fanaticism of the Puritans. The appreciation of and interest in literature — especially in dramatic literature — which had shortly before risen to an unparalleled height, and which had affected all the different strata of the nation, died out, or rather was stifled by main force; and this change was accomplished with extraordinary rapidity and with a force that hurled down everything that came in its way. . . . The neglect into which Shakespeare was allowed to fall can be accounted for only by the fact that the political revolution was also a complete upturning of the whole social fabric, and of the moral, literary, and æsthetic ideas which affected the very character of the nation."

Besides these political events, other causes, as already stated, helped in the destruction. Chief among these was a series of fires, which, by a strange coincidence, destroyed all the buildings where any papers of Shakespeare's, or records of his life, might have been obtained. In 1613, during a performance of *Henry VIII.*, the Globe theatre

was burned, and in all probability manuscripts of the poet, or other written records relating to the history and management of this theatre, were destroyed at that time. In the following year, a second conflagration devastated a large portion of Stratford, and although New Place was spared, it may be assumed, as fifty-four houses fell victims to the flames, that many records and important papers referring to Shakespeare's family were then lost. A few years later a fire broke out in Ben Jonson's house, destroying more especially books and papers. There can be no doubt that among his papers were letters of Shakespeare, and editions of single works, even though Ben Jonson does not mention this fact in the poem ("An Execration upon Vulcan") in which he recounts his losses. It is probable also that the Great Fire of London, in 1666, still further lessened the scanty memorials of Shakespeare's life and work.

Moreover, he himself appears to have made no effort to leave any record of his life to posterity. He did not trouble himself about the printing or the preservation of his works. It is true that they were not written with a view to being printed, but were doubtless sold outright to theatrical managers for representation upon the stage; but, though a poet, he was eminently practical, knew how to make and invest money and to take good care of his property, and we may be sure that he preserved the legal and other documents relating to these business

transactions. Doubtless he also had manuscripts of some if not all of his works and copies of some of the editions that had been published; and these may have had corrections and other memoranda that would throw light upon their history and upon many textual and other questions that perplex editors and critics. But his will makes no reference to books, manuscripts, documents, letters, or other written matter in which he was interested. These may have been informally entrusted to his family, but, if so, they do not appear to have taken care for their preservation. We have no evidence that they did anything to honour his memory except by the erection of the monument in the Stratford church. This apparent neglect, it has been suggested, may be due not so much to any want of esteem or affection as to the fact that he left no male heir. "After his death there was no one who could be regarded as the representative of the family, and for whom it would have been a matter both of pride and of duty to cherish the memory of its founder." His daughters had married, and had family cares and interests of their own. Tradition says that Lady Barnard (the only grandchild of the poet who lived to be twenty years old), upon her second marriage, took certain family documents with her to her future home; but not even tradition pretends to tell what became of them. It appears from the records of litigation concerning her rights in New Place, in which she was engaged after the death of

her first husband, that she inherited the shrewd business qualities of her grandfather. At that time she states that she "hath in her hands or custodie many deeds, evidences, writings, charters, escripts, and muniments, which concern the lands and premises which the defendant claymeth as her inheritance, and other the lands which are the defendant's joynture, and are devised to her by the said Thomas Nash." Besides the title deeds of New Place and other documents relating to that estate, here referred to, it is not unlikely that she had preserved other papers and memorials connected with the history of Shakespeare. She was only eight years old when he died, but that he was very fond of her is proved by his bequeathing to her nearly all his plate in addition to a valuable contingent interest in his estate. We can imagine that she had a childish affection for him which developed and strengthened in after years, and that she treasured many mementoes of him which, as she left no descendants, were subsequently scattered and lost.

Unfortunately, the first biography of Shakespeare worthy of the name was not written until 1709, or nearly a century after his death, being prepared by Nicholas Rowe as an introduction to his edition of the poet's works. It was based mainly upon the researches of Betterton the actor, who a few years earlier (the precise date is uncertain) had visited Stratford for the express purpose of ascertaining what could be learned there concerning the personal

history of the dramatist. He communicated the results of his investigations to Rowe, who incorporated the better part of them in his biographical sketch. Rowe says, in referring to Betterton, "I must own a particular obligation to him for the most considerable part of the passages relating to his life which I have here transmitted to the public, his veneration for the memory of Shakespeare having engaged him to make a journey into Warwickshire on purpose to gather up what remains he could of a name for which he had so great a value." We are indebted to Rowe for the rescue of these and other fragments of information which otherwise would have been lost, and there is no reason for doubting his general accuracy. That he drew for the most part from reliable sources is unquestionable. A few errors have been detected in the minor details that he gives, but the more important particulars have been verified by later investigations. He appears to have exercised great caution in dealing with his materials, discriminating carefully between what he regards as established fact and as doubtful tradition.

With respect to the credibility of the traditional matter, Halliwell-Phillipps remarks in the preface to his *Outlines*:—

"There are many who question the value of the stray morsels collected by Betterton and others in the seventeenth century. The main external argument brought forward in support of their incredulity

is the late period at which the traditions have been recorded. Thus it is said, and with truth, that there is no intimation of the poet having followed the trade of a butcher until nearly a century afterwards, that the poaching exploit remained unnoticed for a still longer time, and so on; these long terms of silence being, it is considered, fatal to a dependence upon such testimonies. But it appears to be overlooked that the Stratford biographical notices, unless we adopt the incredible theory that they were altogether gratuitous and foolish inventions, were in all probability mere repetitions of gossip belonging to a much earlier period. This gossip, it must be remembered, was of a character that was seldom jotted down, and that still more rarely found its way into print. Independently even of these considerations, the above line of argument, however plausible, will not bear the test of impartial examination. It would apply very well to the present age, when incessant locomotion and the reign of newspapers have banished the old habit of reliance upon hearsay for intelligence or for a continuity in the recollection of minor events. The case was very different indeed in the country towns and villages of bygone days, when reading of any kind was the luxury of the few, and intercommunication exceedingly restricted. It may be confidently asserted that, previously to the time of Rowe, books or journals were very rarely to be met with at Stratford-on-Avon, while the large majority of the

inhabitants had never in their lives travelled beyond twenty or thirty miles from their homes. There was in fact a conversational and stagnant, not a reading or a travelling, population; and this state of things continued, with gradual but almost imperceptible advances in the latter directions, until the development of the railway system. The oral history of local affairs thus became in former days imprisoned, as it were, in the districts of their occurrence; and it is accordingly found that, in some cases, provincial incidents have been handed down through successive generations with an accuracy that is truly marvellous. There has been, for example, a tradition current at Worcester from time immemorial that a robber of the sanctus-bell was flayed, and his skin nailed to one of the doors of the cathedral. This is a species of barbarity that must be assigned to a very remote period, and yet the fact of its perpetration has been established in recent years by a scientific analysis of fragments hanging to an ancient door which is still preserved in the crypt. Other instances nearly as curious might be adduced, including the verification of one of Rowe's statements that was first given by him from an oral source a hundred and thirty years after the period to which it refers."

A few of these traditions had been noted in manuscript or in print, as well as some slight mention of facts in Shakespeare's life, before the appearance of Rowe's brief biography.

We might have expected that Sir William Dugdale, who was born in 1605, eleven years before the death of Shakespeare, and whose *Antiquities of Warwickshire* was published in 1656, would have given us some valuable information concerning the personal history of the poet, but he barely mentions him in describing the church and tombs at Stratford.

Fuller, in his *Worthies* (1662), has a very brief account of Shakespeare, which contains no information of value or interest. In the same year (1662) the Rev. John Ward, vicar of Stratford, recorded in his memorandum-book certain traditions about the dramatist. Although he had settled in the town only in that year, there can be no doubt that he reports accurately the local gossip of the time. Many people were then living who must have known Shakespeare personally; and his daughter survived until 1662. It is to be regretted that the vicar did not collect more information from these and other available sources than he has preserved for us.

In 1675 Edward Phillips, the nephew of Milton, in his *Theatrum Poeticum*, writes thus: "William Shakespeare, the glory of the English stage, whose nativity at Stratford-on-Avon is the highest honour that town can boast of, from an actor of tragedies and comedies, he became a maker; and such a maker that, though some others may pretend to a more exact decorum and economy, especially in tragedy, never any expressed a more lofty and tragick height;



never any represented nature more purely to the life; and where the polishments of art are most wanting, as probably his learning was not extraordinary, he phraseth with a certain wild and native elegance; and in all his writings hath an unvulgar style, as well in his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Rape of Lucrece*, and other various poems, as in his dramaticks."

Malone, after quoting this, remarks: "I had long since observed, in the margin of my copy of this book, that the hand of Milton, who was the author's uncle, might be traced in the preface, and in the passage above quoted. The book was licensed for publication two months before the death of that poet. My late friend, Mr. Warton, has made the same observation."

About 1680, John Aubrey, the antiquary, in his *Minutes of Lives*, the manuscript of which he sent to Anthony Wood for use in his *Athenæ Oxonienses*, recorded certain traditions concerning Shakespeare that he had gathered in a visit to Stratford. Halliwell-Phillipps doubts whether Aubrey is as trustworthy as Ward. He says of him:—

"This industrious antiquary was the author of numerous little biographies, which are here and there disfigured by such palpable or ascertained blunders, that it would appear that he must have been in the habit of compiling from imperfect notes of conversations, or, no doubt in many instances, from his own recollections of them. He was unfor-

tunately also one of those foolish and detestable gossips who record everything that they hear or misinterpret, and this without so much as giving a thought to the damage that they may inflict upon the reputation of their victims. It would, therefore, be hazardous as a rule to depend upon his statements in the absence of corroborative evidence, but we may at the same time in a great measure rely upon the accuracy of main facts in those cases in which there is too much elaboration for his memory to have been entirely at fault. We need not, for instance, give credence to his assertion that Shakespeare's father was a butcher, in the literal sense of that term, but it is scarcely possible that he would have given the story about the calf if he had not been told that the poet himself had followed the occupation. In the same way, although it is obvious that the anecdote respecting the constable<sup>1</sup> is incorrectly narrated, no one should hesitate

<sup>1</sup>The "calf" story is told by Aubrey thus: "His father was a butcher; and I have been told heretofore by some of the neighbours, that when he was a boy he exercised his father's trade; but when he kill'd a calfe, he would doe it in a high style, and make a speech." As to the "constable," Aubrey, after remarking that Shakespeare "drew his characters from the different persons that he met," adds that "the constable in the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*" (he probably meant Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*) was drawn from a certain constable at Grendon, Buckinghamshire, where Shakespeare staid one Midsummer night on his way from London to Stratford.

at accepting for truth the circumstance that Shakespeare occasionally rested at Grendon Underwood in taking the Aylesbury route in his journeys between his native town and the metropolis. Very meagre indeed are the fragments of information to be safely collected from Aubrey."

In 1693, a traveller named Dowdall, who visited and described Stratford and several other towns in Warwickshire, gives the inscriptions on Shakespeare's monument, and adds a few traditions which he got from William Castle, who was then the parish clerk and sexton. He told Dowdall that Shakespeare's father was a butcher (and Aubrey also cites him as authority for the statement), but does not add the "calf" story. Halliwell-Phillipps believes that Castle was "a person who could have had no motive for deception in such matters; and the main facts of the poet's Stratford life would, moreover, have been clearly known in that town all through the seventeenth century."

About the same time the Rev. Richard Davies, rector of Sapperton in Gloucestershire, added a few notes on the life of the dramatist to a manuscript biographical dictionary; and these were evidently drawn from oral sources not unworthy of credence.

For almost a century after the appearance of Rowe's *Life of Shakespeare* no serious attempt was made to improve upon it. Pope, Johnson, and Steevens in the biographical sketches prefixed to their editions substantially repeated Rowe's matter.

Malone was the first to attempt a biography on a more extended scale. In the introductions to the Variorum editions of 1803, 1813, and 1821 he presented a large amount of new information, based on his researches in the Stratford records, the manuscripts collected by the actor and manager, Edward Alleyn, at Dulwich, and official records and documents in London. His *Life of Shakespeare*, as completed and published in the Variorum of 1821, fills 287 octavo pages; and to this the discussion of the chronological order of the plays adds 180 pages more.

Of the many contributions to Shakespearian biography since the time of Malone it is not my purpose to attempt any detailed account here. The most important of these have been made by Halliwell-Phillipps, who, between 1850 and his death in 1889, made elaborate investigations in the Stratford archives and other ancient records and documents likely to throw light on the history of Shakespeare and his works, and printed the results of his researches in successive publications and finally in the monumental work in two royal octavo volumes which he modestly entitled *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, the ninth edition of which was issued in 1890.

Mr. Sidney Lee's *Life of Shakespeare* (1898) is the most noteworthy of the other biographies of the dramatist published in the last half-century.



W. J. Royce



## CHAPTER II.

### THE NAME OF SHAKESPEARE

THE name Shakespeare occurs in widely separated parts of England from the thirteenth century. A Simon Shakespeye (probably Shakespere) is mentioned as living in Gloucestershire in 1260; and a Geoffrey Shakespeare in Surrey in 1268. Simon Sakesper was in the service of the Crown in 1278 as "herderer of the Forest of Essex;" and a John Shakespeare appears in a judicial case in 1278-79 at Freyndon in Kent. A Henry Shakespere was a resident of Kirkland, near Penrith, as early as 1349, and "the land of Allan Shakespeare" occurs in connection with a conveyance of landed property in Penrith in 1398, when a William Shakespeare was one of the witnesses. There were also Shakespeares in Nottingham between 1357 and 1360.

The earliest appearance of the name that has been discovered in Warwickshire is in 1359, when two bailiffs of Coventry "account for the property of Thomas Shakespere, felon, who had left his goods and fled."

Other Shakespeares, at about the same time, appear to have been no less disreputable. In cer-

tain records of the reign of Richard II. (from June, 1377, to June, 1379) there is an entry of "Walter Shakespere, formerly in gaol in Colchester Castle;" and a John Shakespeare was "imprisoned in Colchester gaol as a perturbator of the King's peace," March 3rd, 1381. A few other notices of Shakespeares in the fourteenth century have been collected by Mrs. Stopes (*Shakespeare's Family*, 1901) and others. In the fifteenth century the name is often found in parish and other records, particularly in Warwickshire, — in the town of Warwick, in Stratford, Snitterfield, Wraxhall, Temple Balsall, Rowington, Pachwood, Little Packington, Kenilworth, Charlecote, Coventry, Hampton, Lapworth, Nuneaton, Kington, and many other places. At Rowington, twelve miles from Stratford, "one of the most prolific Shakespeare families resided, and no less than three Richard Shakespeares of Rowington, whose extant wills were proved respectively in 1560, 1591, and 1614, were fathers of sons called William" (Lee).

The origin of the name has been the subject of controversy, but it is generally agreed that it is compounded of *shake* and *spear*, and was suggested by the bearing of arms or feats of arms. Verstegan (*Restitution of Decayed Intelligence*, 1605) says: "Breakspear, Shakespeare, and the lyke, have bin surnames imposed upon the first bearers of them for valour and feates of armes;" and Camden (*Remains*, 1605) remarks: "Some are named from that



which they commonly carried, — as Palmer, that is, Pilgrime, for that they carried palme when they returned from Hierusalem; Long-sword, Broad-speare, Fortescu, that is Strong-shield, and in some respect Break-speare, Shake-speare, Shot-bolt, Wag-staffe." In *The Polydoron* (a work of the same period, though without date) it is stated that names "were first questionlesse given for distinction, facultie, consanguinity, desert, quality, . . . as Arme-strong, Shakespeare, of high quality."

Mr. Charles W. Bardsley (*English Surnames*, 2d ed. 1875) thinks that *Shakespeare* belongs to a class of nicknames that became hereditary. He adds: "The nicknames given to lower-class officials some centuries ago were invariably hits at the officious and meddlesome character of their duties." Such names generally referred to the implement or badge of office, with the additional *wag* or *shake*. Thus we find *shake-buckler* (in Halliwell), *shake-lock* (as the designation of a turnkey), *Waggstaff* (in the Hundred Rolls), *Wag-tail*, *Wagspere*; and the still existing *Waghorn*, *Simon Shake-lok*, *Henry Shake-launce*, and *Hugh Shakeshaft* occur in ancient records. In the year 1487 a student at Oxford of the name of Shakespeare changed it into Sawndare (Saunders) because he considered his name too common (*Hugh Sawndare, alias dictus Shakspere, sed mutatum est istud nomen ejus, quod vile reputatum*). Bardsley therefore comes to the conclusion that William Shakespeare was undoubtedly the de-

scendant of some "officer of the law, or one who held service under some feudal lord;" and Karl Elze (*Life of Shakespeare*, English ed. 1888) is inclined to agree with him, because "we know from documentary evidence that all the families of the name of Shakespeare belonged to the lower strata of the nation, to the yeomanry or agricultural class; only two instances have been pointed out where the families belonged to the upper ranks."

Mr. Charles Mackay (*Athenæum*, 1875, ii. 437) maintains that the name is of Celtic origin, "composed of *shac* or *seac* = *dry*, and *spier* = *shanks*, and ought properly to be written *Schacspeir* or *Chaksper*, as, in fact, the poet's father spelt his name." He compares *Sheepshank* and *Cruikshank*.

Among other fanciful etymologies "Jacques Pierre" may be mentioned as perhaps the most absurd.

The orthography of the name has also been the subject of much controversy. In the only five signatures of the dramatist the authenticity of which is undisputed, the spelling appears to be *Shakspere*, though in two of them the second syllable is not easily deciphered, and some experts in paleography read them as *Shakspeare*. But at that time men often wrote their names in more than one way. Dr. John Hall, Shakespeare's son-in-law, signed himself *Hawle* as well as *Hall*. Thomas Quiney's name in the fac-similes of his signature given by Halliwell-Phillipps in his *Outlines* (i. 256), appears

as *Quyney*, *Quyneye*, and *Conoy*, and elsewhere we find other variations. Edward Alleyn used the forms *Alleyn*, *Aleyn*, *Allen*, and *Allin*. Many other instances of the kind might be cited from contemporaneous records and documents. "The name Marlowe is met with in ten different forms, Gascoigne in nineteen, Percy in twenty-three, Cholmondeley in twenty-five, Percival in twenty-nine, and Bruce in thirty-three different forms" (French). In the Stratford records the name of John Shakespeare, the poet's father, occurs in fourteen variations. Of these the most common are *Shaxpeare* (69 times), *Shaxpere* (18 times), *Shakspeyr* (17 times), and *Shakespere* (13 times).

In the local pronunciation the first syllable was unquestionably short, as the majority of the spellings indicate; but Shakespeare's friends in London appear to have assumed that the name was made up of *shake* and *spear*, and pronounced it accordingly. The poet himself adopted the form *Shakespeare* in the dedication of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, the only editions of any of his works which it is certain that he personally saw through the press. In all the quartos with the exception of those of *King Lear* (where it is *Shakspeare*) it is spelt *Shakespeare*, sometimes with the hyphen between the syllables. This is also the form in the *Sonnets* (1609) and in all four folio editions, as well as in the "Commendatory Verses" prefixed to the folios and in all other cases, so far as I am aware, where the

poet is mentioned by contemporary writers. Karl Elze, in his discussion of the subject, remarks:—

“Halliwell[-Phillipps] refers his readers to Milton’s *Epitaph*:—

‘What need my Shakespeare, for his honour’d bones,’ etc.,

and is shocked at the mere thought that the name there could be read with a short first syllable. In like manner, all the witticisms to which the name gave rise presuppose the emphasis on the first syllable. Greene’s jest, that Shakespeare considered himself ‘the onlie Shake-scene in a country;’ Thomas Banercroft’s epigram:—

‘Thou hast so used thy pen, or shook thy speare,  
That poets startle;’

Ben Jonson’s famous line:—

‘In each of which he seems to shake a lance;’

the passage in *Histrion-Mastix*, act ii., where Troilus says to Cressida:—

‘Thy knight his valiant elbow wears,  
That when he shakes his furious speare  
The foe in shivering fearful sort  
May lay him down in death to suort;’

and Spenser’s allusion to Shakespeare:—

‘Whose muse full of high thought’s invention  
Doth, like himself, heroically sound,’

would otherwise completely lose their point. Still, it is not only the early editions of his works that give the form *Shakespeare*, it is also met with in the London records. In the document relating to the grant of the coat-armour in 1596, the name is invariably spelt *Shakespeare*; in that of 1599 it is spelt *Shakespere*; in the license granted by King James, dated May 17-19, 1603, the name is again *Shakespeare*; and in the indenture dated the 11th March, 1612-13, the name is likewise spelt *Shakespeare*. These facts prove with tolerable certainty that in London, and especially in literary and well-educated circles, the name was spelt and pronounced with the first syllable long, and that to shorten it was a provincialism — Boaden calls it ‘a Stratford barbarism’ — an opinion which, among others, is shared by Disraeli in his *Curiosities of Literature* and by Halliwell, both of whom have discussed the subject. The Stratfordians themselves were not altogether unacquainted with the more refined pronunciation of the name, particularly in cases where a more careful language was required. In one of the most carefully-written Stratford documents — ‘a fine levied on the purchase of New Place by Shakespeare in 1597’ — the name occurs five times, and on every occasion is with great distinctness spelt *Shakespeare*. The same spelling is met with in the other documents relating to the purchase of New Place. On the family tombstones in the Stratford church the name is also *Shakespeare*; only in the

inscription below the bust of the poet have we the form *Shakspeare*, and on Susanna's tombstone we have *Shakespere*, the first syllable long, but no *a* in the second. In like manner the poet's brother Gilbert signed himself *Shakespere*."

Mrs. Stopes (*Shakespeare's Family*) notes, in proof that *Shakespeare* was "the Court spelling of the period," the fact that this form is found in "the first official record of the name." When Mary, Countess of Northampton, made out the accounts of her second husband, Sir Thomas Heneage, in 1594, she wrote: "To William Kempe, William Shakespeare, and Richard Burbage," etc. She was the mother of Shakespeare's patron, the Earl of Southampton. In 1594 she married Sir Thomas Heneage, the Vice-Chamberlain of the Household, and that same year Shakespeare was invited to act at Court. Sir Thomas died shortly after, and his widow had to superintend the making up of his official books and check the bills.

It may be added that the great majority of the editors, commentators, and critics of the nineteenth century have adopted the spelling *Shakespeare*. Knight, Furnivall, and Dowden are among the few who prefer *Shakspere*. Schmidt in his *Lexicon*, Abbott in his *Shakespearian Grammar*, Bartlett and Mrs. Furness in their *Concordances*, and Sidney Lee in his *Life of Shakespeare* are among those on the other side.

## CHAPTER III.

### SHAKESPEARE'S ANCESTRY AND BIRTH

OF the ancestry of William Shakespeare we have little knowledge. His father, John Shakespeare, must have come to Stratford before 1552, in which year he was a resident in Henley Street and one of three persons who were fined twelvecpence each for a violation of the sanitary regulations of the town. The relatively large sum indicates that he must have been then a substantial householder.

There is little doubt that he came to Stratford from Snitterfield, a village about three miles distant, and that he was a son of Richard Shakespeare, the tenant of a farm owned by Robert Arden, whose daughter Mary afterwards became John's wife. Richard is mentioned in legal documents dated 1535, 1550, and 1560, and in a will made in 1543. He had another son named Henry, and Thomas Shakespeare living in Snitterfield at that time may have been a third son. Richard died in the latter part of 1560, and letters of administration on his property were issued to his son John in the following February.

In a law suit of 1556 John Shakespeare was styled a "glover;" and in the same year he bought a house in Greenhill Street and another in Henley Street, which was the eastern half of the building now known as the Birthplace. Whether he had previously lived as a tenant in this tenement or in the western half has not been satisfactorily determined.

In 1557 — the exact date is not known — he married Mary Arden, the youngest daughter of Robert Arden, a well-to-do farmer of Wilmecote, near Stratford, who had died a few months before. He owned two farmhouses and a hundred acres of land at Snitterfield, which were rented to tenants, and a house, with about fifty acres of land, at Wilmecote, occupied by himself. This latter estate was known as *Asbies* or *Ashbies*.

The Ardens were an old and respected family in Warwickshire, but the precise relationship of Robert Arden to them is uncertain. His father was a Thomas Arden, whom Mrs. Stopes believes to have been the second son of "Walter Arden of Park Hall, sixteenth in descent from the Saxon sheriff Ailwin." Later, as we shall see, John Shakespeare made application for the impalement of the Arden arms with his own, and the Heralds at first tricked the arms of the Ardens of Park Hall, but afterwards substituted those of the Ardens of Alvauley in Cheshire. But, according to Mrs. Stopes, the reason for this "lay in no breach of connection, but



in the fact that Mary Arden was an heiress, not in the eldest line, but through a *second son*," and the possible arms for a younger son were those borne as such by the Ardens of Alvanley. However that may be, and whether Mary Arden was "of gentle birth" or not, the honour of being the mother of Shakespeare was far higher than any connection with the Ardens of Park Hall could have given her.

Robert Arden was twice married and had seven daughters. The name of his first wife is not known; the second was widow of a substantial farmer named Hill, her maiden name being Agnes Webbe.

Mary was evidently her father's favourite child. In his will (made November 23, 1556) he mentions her first and gives her the largest share of his property: "I bequeathe to my youngest daughter Marye all my land at Willincote caulide Asbyes, and the crop upon the grounde sown and tythde as hitt is . . . and vi<sup>li</sup> xiii<sup>s</sup> iiiii<sup>d</sup> of money to be paid her or ere my goodes be devided."

Robert Arden's movable goods were valued at £77, 11s. 10d. Among the articles mentioned are a feather bed with two mattresses, a coverlet, three bolsters, one pillow, five board-cloths, three towels (among these a coloured one), 6s. 8d. in cash, etc. In the kitchen were four pans, four pots, three candlesticks, a chafing-dish, a frying-pan, a gridiron; further, an axe, two hatchets, four casks, four pails,

a baking-trough, a hand-saw, etc. The inventory of live stock consisted of eight oxen, two bulls, seven cows and four calves, amounting to £24 in value altogether; of four horses and three foals, estimated at £8; of some fifty-two sheep, valued at £7; nine pigs valued at 26s. 8d.; of bees and fowls, valued at 5s., etc.

After quoting these items from the inventory Karl Elze remarks: "How simple, nay, how meagre were the possessions of the household! With the exception of the marriage-bed no others are mentioned, so that the daughters probably slept on sacks of straw or coarse mats. And how few the articles of household furniture! The only things beyond the absolute necessities of life are two painted cloths in the hall, five similar ones in the chamber, and four others of the same sort mentioned without its being specified where they were used. There is not a word about vessels for eating and drinking, nor any mention of articles of silver or even tin. The family probably used wooden spoons and bowls—forks were not then used in England. Nevertheless, this family, although by no means rich, occupied a position higher both as regards rank and wealth than did the Shakespeares, and Mary Arden was decidedly what is called a good match for John Shakespeare."

Halliwell-Phillipps also says: "The appointments of the dwelling were probably superior on the whole to those which were to be found in other residences

of the same class, including no fewer than eleven painted-cloths, a species of artistic decoration that was in those days a favourite substitute for the more expensive tapestry. Pictures of the kind that are now familiar to us were then very rarely indeed to be seen, excepting in palaces or in the larger mansions of the nobility. These painted-cloths were generally formed of canvas upon which were depicted the Seven Ages of Man, the Story of the Prodigal, and such like; grotesque accompaniments, in one or more of the rooms, to the 'bacon in the roof.'

"The inventory of Robert Arden's goods enables us to realize the kind of life that was followed by the poet's mother during her girlhood. In the total absence of books or means of intellectual education, her acquirements must have been restricted to an experimental knowledge of matters {connected with the farm and its house. There can be no doubt that the maiden with the pretty name, she who has been so often represented as a nymph of the forest, communing with nothing less æsthetic than a nightingale or a waterfall, spent most of her time in the homeliest of rustic employments; and it is not at all improbable that, in common with many other farmers' daughters of the period, she occasionally assisted in the more robust occupations of the field. It is at all events not very likely that a woman, unendowed with an exceptionally healthy and vigorous frame, could have been the parent of a Shakespeare.

Of her personal character or social gifts nothing whatever is known."

Neither do we know what was her age at the time of her marriage; but it seems probable that the youngest of so large a family, who survived till 1608 and outlived her sisters by many years, was in her teens when John Shakespeare had the good fortune to win her affections. This view is not inconsistent with her appointment as one of the executors of her father's will. Swinburn, in his *Treatise of Testaments*, 1590 (quoted by Halliwell-Phillipps), says: "The testator hath power to appoint executors not onely persons of ful age, but also infants, and the act done by the infant as executor, as the releasing of the debt due to the testator, or the selling or distributing of the testators goods, is saide to be sufficient in law."

The match appears to have been every way a fortunate one for John Shakespeare. It gave him the reputation among his neighbours of having married an heiress and invested him with no small degree of local importance. He began at once to gain official honours from his fellow townsmen. In 1557 he was elected as one of the ale-tasters, officers whose duty it was to see to the quality of malt liquors and bread. About the same time he was received into the municipal corporation as a burgess; and in September, 1558, he was appointed one of the four petty constables. He was re-elected to the same office October 6th, 1559; and on the same day

he was chosen one of the affeerors appointed to determine the fines for those offences which were punishable arbitrarily, and for which no express penalties were prescribed by statute. This latter office he again filled in 1561, when he was elected one of the two chamberlains of the borough, an office that he held for two years, delivering his second account to the corporation in the first month of 1564. It was the duty of the chamberlains to receive the rents and revenues of the corporation, to make all payments, and in general to attend to the financial business of the town.

John Shakespeare was evidently an expert accountant, and the greater part of the duties of the chamberlains' office appear to have devolved upon him. The accounts from Michaelmas, 1564, to Michaelmas, 1565, were put under his individual superintendence, as appears from the following heading to them when they were submitted to the corporation on February 15th, a day on which he is noted among the aldermen present: "The accompt of William Tylor and William Smythe, chamburlens, made by John Shakspeyr the xvth day of February, in the eight yere of the reigne of our soveraigne Lady Elyzabeth, by the grace of God of Englonde, Fraunce and Irelonde, quene, defendor of the feith, etc., for one yere endyng at the feest of Sent Mychell tharchaungell now last past." We are told that "in thys accompt the chaumbur ys in det unto John Shakspeyr, to be payd unto hym by

the next chamberlein, vij.s. iij.d.," an entry which was cancelled upon the repayment in January, 1568.

It is difficult to imagine John doing all this work, if he was unable to read and write; but in signing accounts and other papers he regularly made his mark, as the majority of the aldermen and other town officers at Stratford did. It has been asserted that men who could write sometimes used the mark instead; but Halliwell-Phillipps says: "There is no reasonable pretence for assuming that, in the time of John Shakespeare, whatever may have been the case at earlier periods, it was the practice for marks to be used by those who were capable of signing their names. No instance of the kind has been discovered amongst the numerous records of his era that are preserved at Stratford-on-Avon, while even a few rare examples in other districts, if such are to be found, would be insufficient to countenance a theory that he was able to write. All the known evidences point in the opposite direction, and it should be observed that, in common with many other of his illiterate contemporaries, he did not always adhere to the same kind of symbol, at one time contenting himself with a rudely-shaped cross and at another delineating a fairly good representation of a pair of dividers, an instrument that is used in several trades for making circles, or setting off equal lengths in leather and other materials. John Lambert, the poet's aunt, and Edmund, her husband, used respectively at least three and four dif-

ferent marks;" and other instances of the kind are added. The same critic says elsewhere that "nearly all tradesmen then reckoned with counters, the results on important occasions being entered by professional scribes."

Sidney Lee, on the other hand, says that John Shakespeare, "when attesting documents, occasionally made his mark, but there is evidence in the Stratford archives that he could write with facility." It would be interesting to know more about this "evidence," which Halliwell-Phillips, than whom no man was more familiar with the Stratford archives, failed to discover.

In September, 1567, John Shakespeare was one of three persons nominated for the position of high bailiff, or chief magistrate, but failed of election. On the 4th of September the next year, however, he was more fortunate. At that time, according to the records, the corporation "proceedyd to thelectione of theire balyf for the next yere," and John Shakespeare was the chosen one out of the three who were nominated, — "the names whereof one to be balyf, Mr. John Shakysper, Mr. Robert Perrot, Robert Salusburye." He presided as high bailiff at a meeting of the council held on the 1st of October, and at the Court of Record on the 6th and 20th of the same month. In precepts that he issued in December he is termed, "justiciarius de pace ac ballivus infra burgum" (justice of the peace and bailiff of the town). After his year of office he was

always called "Master" (or "Magister") in the records.

In September, 1571, he was elected chief alderman, and held that position for a year. While in office (in January, 1572) he was associated with Mr. Adrian Quiney, then the high bailiff, in important legal business. The vote of the council reads thus: "At this hall yt is agreed, by the asent and consent of the aldermen and burgeses aforeseid, that Mr. Adrian Queny, now baylif, and Mr. John Shakespere shall at Hillary terme next ensuinge deale in the affayres concerninge the commen wealthe of the borroughe accordinge to their discrecions."

In 1556, as we have seen, John Shakespeare was called a "glover" in the town records, and he is again so termed, thirty years later (1586), in an official document. After his marriage he speculated in wool bought from the neighbouring farmers, and at times dealt also in corn and other agricultural produce.

In those days it was common, especially in the smaller towns, for several trades or lines of business to be thus united in the hands of a single person. In many cases the producer of the raw material was also its manufacturer. A glover, for instance, might raise the sheep that furnished him with leather, and might also be a dealer in leather and other articles made from it, as well as in meat and wool. This may explain the tradition that Shakespeare's father was a "butcher." It is recorded in 1595 that



“Thomas Rogers now baieliefe of this towne [Stratford] besydes his butchers trade, which untill now of late hee allwaies used, hee ys a buyer and seller of corne for great somes, and withall usethe grazinge and buyinge and sellinge of cattell, and hathe in howshold xiiij. persons;” and in the same year we are told, under *Hyghe Streete*, that “Jhon Perrye useth sometimes his butchers trade besides his husbandrye.” There can be little doubt that John Shakespeare, in common with other farmers and landowners, often killed his own beasts and pigs both for home consumption and for sale, but it is in the highest degree improbable that his leading business was ever that of a butcher. If that had been the case, there would assuredly have been some allusion to the fact in the local records.

As already stated, the marriage of John Shakespeare and Mary Arden probably took place early in 1557. It must have been subsequent to the proving of Robert Arden's will, December 16th, 1556, when Mary is referred to by her maiden name; and the baptism of her first child, Joan Shakespeare, occurred September 15th, 1558. This child died in infancy, or before the year 1569, as another daughter named Joan was baptized on the 15th of April in that year, but the date of her death or burial is not recorded in the parish register. A second daughter, Margaret, baptized December 2d, 1562, was buried April 30th, 1563.

William, the third child and the first son, was

baptized April 26th, 1564, but the date of his birth is not known. It has been generally assumed that it occurred on the 23d of April (St. George's Day), as it was a common practice to baptize infants when three days old; but the rule, if rule it could be called, was often varied from, and there is not a particle of evidence that it was followed in this instance. Besides, the inscription on the poet's monument in the Stratford church tells us that he died on the 23d of April, 1616, in the 53d year of his age. If he was born on the 23d of April, 1564, he would of course be *in* his 53d year *after* that date in 1616; but even if it is admitted (as some have urged) that the 53d year might be supposed to begin on that day — as in strictness it might at the recurrence of the *hour* of birth — it is probable that, if he had died on that anniversary, the coincidence would be mentioned in the inscription. On the whole, it is safe to say, with Halliwell-Phillipps, that the poet was born "upon or almost immediately before the twenty-second day of April, 1564, but most probably on that Saturday."

De Quincey was the first to suggest that April 22d may have been the date; but it should be understood that the 22d of April, as dates were then reckoned in England, corresponds to our 2d of May, New Style not being introduced into that country until the year 1752.

Halliwell-Phillipps, referring to De Quincey's sug-

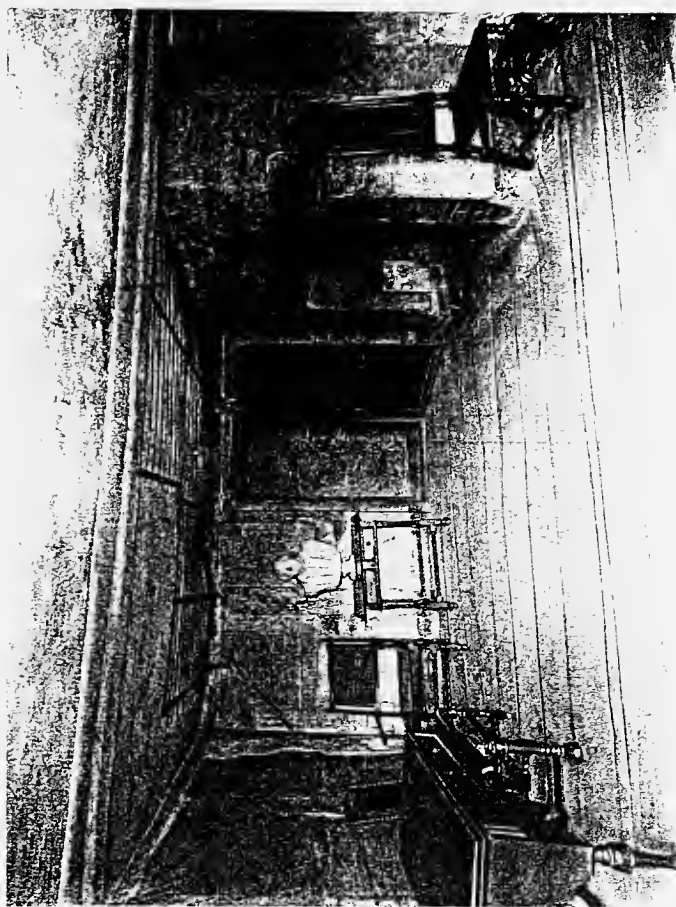
gestion, remarks: "It was derived from the circumstance of the poet's only grandchild having been married to Thomas Nash on the 22d of April, 1626; and few things are more likely than the selection of her grandfather's birthday for such a celebration. Only ten years had elapsed since his death, and that he had been kind to her in her childhood may be safely inferred from the remembrances in the will. Whatever opinion may be formed respecting the precise interpretation of the record of the age under the monumental effigy, the latter is a certain evidence that Shakespeare was not born after the 23d of April. It may also be fairly assumed that the event could not have happened many days previously, for it was almost the universal practice amongst the middle classes of that time to baptize children very shortly after birth. The notion that Shakespeare died on his birthday was not circulated until the middle of the last century, and it is completely devoid of substantial foundation. Had so unusual a circumstance occurred, it is all but impossible that it should not have been numbered amongst the early traditions of Stratford-on-Avon, and there is good evidence that no such incident was known in that town at the close of the seventeenth century."

At the time of the poet's birth it is quite certain that his parents resided in the western half of the house in Henley Street, which tradition points out as his birthplace. We have seen that one of the

houses bought by John Shakespeare in 1556 was in Henley Street, and was undoubtedly the eastern half of this same building. He did not become the owner of the western half until 1575. As the town records show that in 1552 his residence was in Henley Street, it is probable that he rented and occupied one of these tenements at that time. It may have been the eastern one, which was the smaller, and of which he became the owner in 1556. His marriage in 1557 and his growing prosperity in business may have led him to rent the more commodious western tenement for residence, and to use the eastern one for a woolshop. Later (in 1575) he was able to buy the western tenement, thus becoming owner of the whole building.

There is no record or any other clear evidence of the location of the estate purchased in 1575, but it is unlikely that John Shakespeare would have bought any other house than that which he occupied either as a dwelling or as a shop. We have positive evidence that he owned the Henley Street building in 1590, and we know that his son William inherited it, mentioning it in his will in 1616 as then occupied by his sister, Joan Hart. It is unlikely that she would have resided there if it had not been the home of her parents.

On the whole, we may safely agree with Mrs. Stopes that "either John Shakespeare owned the birthplace [the western tenement] in 1552, and resided in it until he added the woolshop [the



Top photograph is copy of H. Sturges's drawing



eastern tenement] in 1556; or he rented the birthplace in 1552, which he purchased in 1575."

The two tenements are collectively mentioned as the "house in which Shakespeare was born" in Winter's plan of the town, in 1759, and also in Greene's view, engraved in 1769. This view was published just before Garrick's Jubilee of 1769, but up to that time we find no information as to which of the two houses was the birthplace; but during the Jubilee, the western tenement was thus designated, and the room in which the birth occurred was also pointed out. Mr. R. B. Wheler, in his *Guide to Stratford-upon-Avon* (1814), says: "The stranger is shown a room over the butcher's shop, in which our bard is said to have been born; and the numberless visitors, who have literally covered the walls of this chamber with names and other memorials, sufficiently evince the increasing resort to this hallowed roof." Mr. Wheler told Halliwell-Phillipps that he was indebted for the identification of this room to his father, who was at the Jubilee. The "butcher's shop" was the lower front room of the western tenement, and the room over it is the one still shown as that in which the poet was born.

The estate remained in the possession of the Hart family until 1806, when it was sold to one Thomas Court. His widow died in 1846, and the next year the property was "acquired by two committees of gentlemen, the representatives of a large body of independent subscribers who had come

forward to endeavour to save the Birthplace from whispered designs of an unpatriotic character. The purchase was completed in 1848 to four delegates selected from the committees, and in July, 1866, those nominal owners surrendered the legal estate, under a public trust, into the hands of the Corporation of Stratford" (Halliwell-Phillipps).

The infant Shakespeare was exposed to a far more serious peril than the ordinary ills that babyhood is heir to. The plague visited Stratford in the latter half of 1564, and in those six months 238 of the inhabitants were its victims, eighty-three of whom died in the single month of September. This was a full sixth of the entire population, which, estimated by the average number of births and deaths, could not have exceeded fourteen hundred. Almost every house in the town must have been visited by the scourge. That John Shakespeare's was spared is regarded by Karl Elze as "a proof that the house was kept in an orderly, cleanly, and rational state," notwithstanding that the occupant had been fined in 1552 for the heap of filth before the front door (page 25), and again, with four of his townsmen, including the high bailiff, in 1558, "for not kepyng ther gutters cleane." Whether John had profited by these sanitary lessons or not, some good angel watched over the cradle of the baby William in that terrible half-year of 1564, and our literature was spared a measureless and irreparable loss.



John Shakespeare, like his fellows in the town council, appears to have been a lover of the drama. When he was high bailiff in 1569 licenses for performances in the town were granted to the Queen's and the Earl of Worcester's companies of players. The Queen's company received nine shillings and the Earl's twelvecence for their first entertainments, to which the public were admitted free. They doubtless gave other performances afterwards for which an entrance fee was charged.

John very likely took the five-year-old William to see them act. We know that in the city of Gloucester (only thirty miles from Stratford) a man took his little boy, born in the same year with Shakespeare, to a free dramatic performance similarly provided by the corporation. In his autobiography, written in his old age, the good man, whose name was Willis, gives a quaint account of the experience which is worth quoting, particularly for the sketch of the play, which was one of the "moralities" then in vogue:—

"In the city of Gloucester the manner is, as I think it is in other like corporations, that, when players of enterludes come to towne, they first attend the Mayor to enforme him what noble-mans servants they are, and so to get licence for their publike playing; and if the Mayor like the actors, or would shew respect to their lord and master, he appoints them to play their first play before himselfe and the Aldermen and Common Counsell of

the city; and that is called the Mayors play, where every one that will comes in without money, the Mayor giving the players a reward as hee thinks fit to shew respect unto them. At such a play my father tooke me with him, and made mee stand betweene his leggs as he sate upon one of the benches, where wee saw and heard very well. The play was called the Cradle of Security, wherein was personated a king or some great prince, with his courtiers of severall kinds, amongst which three ladies were in speciall grace with him; and they, keeping him in delights and pleasures, drew him from his graver counsellors, hearing of sermons and listning to good counsell and admonitions, that, in the end, they got him to lye downe in a cradle upon the stage, where these three ladies, joyning in a sweet song, rocked him asleepe that he snorted againe; and in the meane time closely conveyed under the cloaths wherewithall he was covered a vizard, like a swine's snout, upon his face, with three wire chaines fastned thereunto, the other end whereof being holden severally by those three ladies who fall to singing againe, and then discovered his face that the spectators might see how they had transformed him, going on with their singing. Whilst all this was acting, there came forth of another doore at the farthest end of the stage two old men, the one in blew with a serjeant-at-armes his mace on his shoulder, the other in red with a drawn sword in his hand and leaning with the other hand

upon the others shoulder; and so they two went along in a soft pace round about by the skirt of the stage, till at last they came to the cradle, when all the court was in greatest jollity; and then the foremost old man with his mace stroke a fearfull blow upon the cradle, whereat all the courtiers, with the three ladies and the vizard, all vanished; and the desolate prince starting up bare-faced, and finding himselfe thus sent for to judgement, made a lamentable complaint of his miserable case, and so was carried away by wicked spirits. This prince did personate in the morrall the Wicked of the World; the three ladies, Pride, Covetousnesse and Luxury; the two old men, the End of the World and the Last Judgment. This sight tooke such impression in me that, when I came towards mans estate, it was as fresh in my memory as if I had seen it newly acted." Willis's book was entitled "Mount Tabor or Private Exercises of a Penitent Sinner, published in the yeare of his age 75, Anno Dom. 1639."

## CHAPTER IV.

### SHAKESPEARE'S EDUCATION

WHEN William was seven years old he doubtless entered the Stratford Grammar School. That was the earliest age at which he could be admitted; and the only other requirement, in the case of a Stratford boy, was that he should be able to read; and this he had probably learned at home, with the aid of a "horn-book," such as he afterwards referred to in *Love's Labour's Lost* (v. 1. 49): —

"Yes, yes; he teaches boys the horn-book.  
What is a, b, spelt backward with the horn on its head?"

Or he may have had an "A-B-C book," which often contained a catechism, in addition to the elementary reading matter; like that to which there is an allusion in *King John* (i. 1. 196): —

"Now your traveller —  
He and his toothpick at my worship's mess,  
And when my knightly stomach is sufficed,  
Why, then I suck my teeth and catechise  
My picked man of countries: 'My dear sir,' —  
Thus, leaning on my elbow, I begin, —  
'I shall beseech you' — that is question now;  
And then comes answer like an Absey book."

The Grammar School was an ancient institution in Shakespeare's day, having been originally founded in the first half of the fifteenth century by the local Guild for the children of its members. The Guild was dissolved by Henry VIII. in 1547, and its possessions remained as Crown property until 1553, the school being given up. Meanwhile the leading citizens — the old officers of the Guild — had petitioned Edward VI. to restore that society as a municipal corporation. He granted their prayer, and by a charter dated June 7th, 1553, put the government of the town in the hands of its inhabitants, making over the estates, revenues, and chattels of the Guild to the corporation. He also re-created the school by royal charter as "The King's New School of Stratford-upon-Avon." The charter describes it as "a certain free grammar school, to consist of one master and teacher, hereafter for ever to endure." The master was to be appointed by the Earl of Warwick, and was to receive twenty pounds a year from the income of certain lands given by the King for that purpose. A part of the expenses of the school is to this day paid from the same royal endowment.

The training in an English free day-school in the time of Elizabeth depended much on the attainments of the master, and these varied greatly, bad teachers being the rule and good ones the exception. "It is a general plague and complaint of the whole land," writes Henry Peacham in the 17th century,

“for, for one discreet and able teacher, you shall find twenty ignorant and careless; who (among so many fertile and delicate wits as England affordeth) whereas they make one scholar, they mar ten.” Roger Ascham, some years earlier, had written in the same strain. In many towns the office of schoolmaster was conferred on “an ancient citizen of no great learning.” Sometimes a quack conjuring doctor had the position, like Pinch in the *Comedy of Errors* (v. 1. 237), who is called a “schoole master” in the stage-direction of the folio of 1623, and whom Antipholus of Ephesus describes as

“One Pinch, a hungry lean-faced villain,  
A mere anatomy, a mountebank,  
A threadbare juggler, and a fortune-teller,  
A needy, hollow-eyed, sharp-looking wretch,  
A living dead man.”

In old times the village pedagogue often had the reputation of being a conjurer and one who could exorcise evil spirits — perhaps because he was the one man in the village, except the priest, who could speak Latin, the only language supposed to be “understanded of devils.”

The masters of the Stratford school at the time when Shakespeare probably attended it were university men of at least fair scholarship and ability, as we infer from the fact that they rapidly gained promotion in the church. Thomas Hunt, who was master during the most important years of Will-

iam's school course, became vicar of the neighbouring village of Luddington. "In the pedantic Holofernes of *Love's Labour's Lost*, Shakespeare has carefully portrayed the best type of the rural schoolmaster, as in *Pinch* he has portrayed the worst, and the freshness and fulness of detail imparted to the former portrait may easily lead to the conclusion that its author was drawing upon his own experience." We need not suppose that Holofernes is the exact counterpart of Master Hunt, but the latter was probably, like the former, a thorough scholar.

The studies in the school were mainly Latin, with writing and arithmetic and perhaps a mere smattering of other branches. A little Greek was sometimes taught in the grammar schools, and this may have been the case at Stratford. Ben Jonson credits Shakespeare with "small Latin and less Greek," which some critics interpret as equivalent to "no Greek;" but if that had been Ben's meaning he would pretty certainly have put it so, for he was not inclined to overstate Shakespeare's classical attainments. "Scholars of note," as Professor J. W. Hales remarks, in his article on "Shakespeare's Greek Names" (*Cornhill Magazine*, Feb., 1876), believe that the "small Latin and less Greek" is "entirely decisive evidence" that Shakespeare's knowledge of these languages was "of an appreciable amount, considering how high was the learned Ben's standard." He himself dwells on

“the full intelligence and mastery of their sense and associations with which he uses” Greek names. *Ophelia* is one of these, which Ruskin considers to be the Greek *ὀφελία* (help) and in its application to Polonius’s daughter to have an ironical force; and this Professor Hales believes that “Shakespeare may have perceived and felt and acknowledged.” To cite another instance, “there can be little doubt that the name *Desdemona* is from the Greek *δυσ-δαίμων* (ill-starred), and its singular fitness for the unfortunate woman who bears it will need no assertion for those who really know the play.” Still, as the critic admits, “it would be rash indeed to infer from such considerations that Shakespeare was a Greek scholar of any great pretensions;” for it “cannot be demonstratively shown that he was conscious of the curious significances” pointed out. The most that can be said is that “in some cases he may have been so.”

The boy’s first lessons in Latin were probably from two well-known books of the time, the *Accidence* and the *Sententiæ Pueriles*. The examination of Master Page by the Welsh parson and schoolmaster, Sir Hugh Evans, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (iv. 1) is taken almost verbally from the *Accidence*.

The *Sententiæ Pueriles* was a collection of brief sentences from many authors, including moral and religious passages intended for the use of the boys on Saints’ days.



The Latin Grammar studied by William was certainly Lilly's, the standard manual of the time, as long before and after. The first edition was published in 1513, and one was issued as late as 1817; or more than three hundred years afterward. In *The Taming of the Shrew* (i. 1. 167) a passage from Terence is quoted in the modified form in which it appears in this grammar.

In *Love's Labour's Lost* (iv. 2. 95) Holofernes quotes the "good old Mantuan," as he calls him, the passage being evidently a reminiscence of Shakespeare's schoolboy Latin. The "Mantuan" is not Virgil, as one might at first suppose (and as Mr. Andrew Lang, who is a good scholar, assumes in his pleasant comments on the play in *Harper's Magazine* for May, 1893), but Baptista Mantuanus, or Giovanni Battista Spagnuoli (or Spagnoli), who got the name Mantuanus from his birthplace. He died in 1516, less than fifty years before Shakespeare was born, and was the author of sundry *Eclogues*, which the pedants of that day preferred to Virgil's, and which were much read in schools. The first *Eclogue* begins with the passage quoted by Holofernes.

A little earlier in the same scene the old pedant gives us a quotation from Lilly's Grammar. Other bits of Latin with which he interlards his talk are taken, with little or no variation, from the *Sententiæ Pueriles* or similar Elizabethan phrase-books.

The school hours, in summer, were from six in the morning until six in the evening, and in winter from daybreak till dusk, with intermissions of a quarter of an hour or more at nine and three and an interval of somewhat more than an hour at noon. The time spent in school would be about ten hours. These facts are taken from *The Grammar Schoole*, by John Brinsley, published in 1612, when the school arrangements did not materially differ from what they were in Shakespeare's boyhood.

It would seem that some objection had been made to the intermissions at nine and three, on the ground that the boys then "do nothing but play;" but Brinsley believed that the boys did their work the better for these brief respites from it. He adds: "It is very requisite also that they should have weekly one part of an afternoon for recreation, as a reward of diligence, obedience, and profiting; and that to be appointed at the master's discretion, either the Thursday, after the usual custom, or according to the best opportunity of the place."

Schoolboys in that olden time appear to have been much like those nowadays. They sometimes played truant, as we learn from allusions in Shakespeare and other writers of the time. The idle pupils often "made shift to escape correction" by methods not unknown in modern schools. Boys who had faithfully prepared their lessons would "prompt" others who had been less diligent. We get some interesting glimpses of this and other

features of school life in Elizabethan days from the autobiography of Willis, who has already been quoted (page 41). As he was of the same age as Shakespeare, he must have been in the school at Gloucester when William was a pupil at Stratford. He says:—

“Before Master Dowdale came to be our master at Christ-school, an ancient citizen of no great learning was our schoolmaster, whose manner was to give us severall lessons in the evening, by construing it to every forme, and in the next morning to examine us thereupon; by making all the boyes in the first forme to come from their seates and stand on the outsides of their desks, towardes the middle of the schoole, and so the second forme, and the rest in order, whiles himself walked up and down by them, and hearing them construe their lesson one after another; and then giving one of the words to one, and another to another (as he thought fit), for parsing of it. Now, when the two highest formes were dispatched, some of them, whom we call prompters, would come and sit in our seates of the lower formes, and so being at our elbowes, would put into our mouths answers to the master's questions, as he walked up and downe by us; and so by our prompters help we made shift to escape correction, but understood little to profit by it; having this circular motion, like the mil-horse that travels all day, yet in the end finds himselfe not a yard further than when he began.

“I, being thus supported by my prompter, it fell out one day that one of the eldest schollers and one of the highest forme fell out with mee upon occasion of some boyes-play abroad; and in his anger, to doe me the greatest hurt hee could (which then he thought to be to fall under the rod), he dealt with all the prompters, that none of them should helpe me, and so (as he thought) I must necessarily be beaten. When I found myselfe at this strait, I gathered all my wits together (as we say) and listned the more carefully to my fellowes that construed before me, and having also some easie word to my lot for parsing, I made hard shift to escape for that time. And when I observed my adversaries displeasure to continue against me, so as I could have no helpe from my prompters, I doubled my diligence and attention to our masters construing our next lesson to us; and observing carefully how in construction one word followed and depended upon another, which with heedfull observing two or three lessons more, opened the way to shew me how one word was governed of another in the parsing; so as I needed no prompter, but became able to bee a prompter myselfe; and so evill intended to mee by fellow-scholler, turned to my great good.”

School discipline at that time was extremely severe, as we learn from Ascham, Peacham, and other writers on education in the sixteenth century.

Thomas Tusser, who was a pupil at Eton about

1545, tells of his painful experiences in verses that have been often quoted : —

“ From Paul's I went, to Eton sent,  
To learn straightways the Latin phrase ;  
When fifty-three stripes given to me  
At once I had :  
For fault but small, or none at all  
It came to pass, thus beat I was.  
See, Udall, see the mercy of thee  
To me, poor lad ! ”

Nicholas Udall, author of the first English comedy, *Ralph Roister Doister*, was then master of Eton.

Sidney Lee, in his *Stratford-on-Avon*, remarks :  
“ A repulsive picture of the terrors which the schoolhouse had for a nervous child is drawn in a ‘prétie and merry new interlude’ entitled ‘The Disobedient Child, compiled by Thomas Ingeland, late student in Cambridge,’ about 1560. A boy who implores his father not to force him to go to school tells of his companions’ sufferings there — how

“ Their tender bodies both night and day  
Are whipped and scourged, and beat like a stone,  
That from top to toe the skin is away ; ”

and a story is repeated of how a scholar was tormented to death by ‘his bloody master.’ Other accounts show that the playwright has not gone far beyond the fact.”

We will try to believe, however, that Master Hunt of Stratford was of a milder disposition. Holofernes seems well disposed towards his pupils, and is invited to dine with the father of one of them; and Sir Hugh Evans, in his examination of William Page, has a very kindly manner. It is to be noted, indeed, that in few of Shakespeare's references to school life is there any mention of whipping as a punishment.

How long William remained in the Grammar School we do not know, but probably not more than six years, or until he was thirteen. In 1577 his father was beginning to have bad luck in his business, and the boy very likely had to be taken from school for work of some kind.

Whatever he may have learned at the Stratford school, we may be quite certain that it was all the regular schooling he ever had; and we have no reason to suppose that he kept up his classical studies after he left school. Attempts have been made to prove him a scholar, but a careful examination of his works proves the contrary. His quotations from Latin authors are confined to those then read in school, and are such as a schoolboy might make. In one instance at least, which has already been mentioned, the form of the quotation shows that it was taken from Lilly's *Latin Grammar*, and not from the original work, a play of Terence. He makes frequent mistakes in classical names, which a learned man — like Bacon, for instance — could

never have been guilty of. Bacon, indeed, gives some of these very names correctly in passages that have been quoted to illustrate the resemblance between his works and Shakespeare's; while they really show that the dramatist was ignorant of what the philosopher was familiar with.

The training in the Grammar School was, however, but an insignificant part of Shakespeare's education, in the broader sense. The poet is born, not made, says the ancient saw; but the development of his genius is largely dependent upon where and under what influences he lives in his childhood and in later years. His genius, as the derivation of the word implies, is a natural endowment, but what it shall become and what it shall produce will be, in great measure, determined by outward circumstances.

Shakespeare's only *homes* were in Stratford-on-Avon and London, and in both he was eminently fortunate. He was born and spent the first twenty years of his life in the country—in the heart of rural England. His manhood was passed in the city—in what was then, as now, the greatest of cities.

"We know," as Professor Baynes remarks in his *Shakespeare Studies*, "that Shakespeare was born and lived for twenty years at Stratford-upon-Avon; and we can say therefore with certainty that all the physical and moral influences of that picturesque and richly-storied Midland district melted

as years went by into the full current of his ardent blood, became indeed the vital element, the very breath of life his expanding spirit breathed. We know a good deal about his home, his parents, and his domestic surroundings; and these powerful factors in the development of any mind gifted with insight and sensibility must have acted with redoubled force on a nature so richly and harmoniously endowed as that of the Stratford poet. It would be difficult indeed to overestimate the combined effect of these vital elements on his capacious and retentive mind, a mind in which the receptive and creative powers were so equally poised and of such unrivalled strength."

Warwickshire was known in the poet's own day as "the heart of England." Indeed, it was his friend, Michael Drayton, born the year before himself, who first called it so. In his *Poly-Olbion* (1613) Drayton refers to his native county as "That shire which we the heart of England well may call." The form of the expression seems to imply that it was original with him. It was doubtless suggested by the central situation of the county, about equidistant from the eastern, western, and southern shores of the island; but it is no less appropriate with reference to its historical, romantic, and poetical associations. Drayton, whose rhymed geography in the *Poly-Olbion* is rather prosaic and tedious, attains a kind of genuine inspiration when, in his 13th book, he comes to describe



“Brave Warwick that abroad so long advanced her Bear,  
By her illustrious Earls renowned everywhere;  
Above her neighbouring shires which always bore her  
head.”

The verse catches something of the music of the throstle and the lark, of the woosel “with golden bill” and the nightingale with her tender strains, as he tells of these Warwickshire birds, and of the region with “flowery bosom brave” where they breed and warble; but in Shakespeare the same birds sing with a finer music — more like that to which we may still listen in the fields and woodlands along the lazy-winding Avon.

In Shakespeare's time Warwickshire was divided by the Avon into two districts, known respectively as Arden and Feldon. Arden included the forest region north of the river, while Feldon was the open country to the south, made up of arable and pasture land interspersed with woods, as the Arden district was with scattered farms and fields.

Agriculture and mining have in modern times effaced the distinction between these ancient districts, and these causes had begun to operate even in the Elizabethan age. The Forest of Arden, which had extended across the entire county and far beyond it on either side, had then become much restricted, and farms and pastures were encroaching more and more upon its limits; but it still retained enough of its primitive character to render the

youthful poet familiar with the beauty and freedom of woodland life, and to enable him later to impart to the scenery of *As You Like It* a freshness and reality which otherwise he could hardly have given it. It is true that he took the name of Arden from Lodge's novel of *Rosalynde*, from which he derived the main incidents of his plot; and in the novel the Forest of Arden is the one by that name on the borders of France and Belgium; but it was the Warwickshire Arden that inspired the "woodnotes wild" which Milton ascribes to him, and the expression was doubtless suggested by the perusal of this charming pastoral play.

Not only in *As You Like It*, but in *Love's Labour's Lost*, the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, to say nothing of minor touches in other plays and in the poems, Shakespeare shows an intimate knowledge of woodland scenery and life; and he must have gained much, if not most of this knowledge from his youthful familiarity with the Warwickshire Arden.

His love of nature was that of a child for its foster-mother; Wordsworth's was never more so. We can imagine Nature bending over his cradle, and singing in the slightly varied verse of the Cumberland minstrel, —

"This child I to myself will take,  
He shall be mine, and I will make  
A poet of my own."

His poetry is full of the beauty and the fragrance of the flowers that bloom in and about Stratford; and the wonderful accuracy of his allusions to them — their colours, their habits, their time of blossoming, everything concerning them — shows how thoroughly at home with them he was, how intensely he loved and studied them. The Avon flows through his verse, with the trees that hang over it and the meadows that border it. He pictures it as the scene of poor Ophelia's death: —

“There is a willow grows aslant a brook,  
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream.”

The description could have been written only by one who had observed the reflection of the whitish underside of the willow-leaves in the water over which they hung. It is the Avon too which is reproduced in that singularly musical simile in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, one of his earliest plays: —

“The current that with gentle murmur glides,  
Thou know'st, being stopp'd, impatiently doth rage;  
But when his fair course is not hindered,  
He makes sweet music with the enamell'd stones,  
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge  
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage,  
And so by many winding nooks he strays  
With willing sport to the wild ocean.  
Then let me go, and hinder not my course.  
I'll be as patient as a gentle stream,

And make a pastime of each weary step,  
Till the last step have brought me to my love;  
And there I 'll rest, as after much turmoil  
A blessed soul doth in Elysium."

As Mr. J. R. Wise says in his little book on Stratford, "take up what play you will, and you will find glimpses of the scenery round Stratford. His maidens ever sing of 'blue-veined violets,' and 'daisies pied,' and 'pansies that are for thoughts,' and 'ladies'-smocks all silver-white,' that still stud the meadows of the Avon. . . . All this, and the tenderness that such beauty gives, you find in the pages of Shakespeare, and it is not too much to say that he painted them because they were ever associated in his mind with all that he held precious and dear, both of the earliest and the latest scenes of his life."

It was also in Stratford and its neighbourhood that he got the minute knowledge of the practical side of country life which appears in his works. Wilmecote, the home of his mother, was within walking distance; and so was Snitterfield, where his father had lived before he came to Stratford, and where his uncle Henry still resided. John Shakespeare, as we have seen, must have had large dealings with the farmers there and elsewhere; and William must have seen much of these people, their habits, manners, and employments, in the company of his father, or when wandering at his own will in the vicinity of Stratford. He went to London before

his literary career began, and lived there until it closed, with only brief occasional visits to Warwickshire. In the metropolis he could not have added much to his early lessons in the country life and character of which he has given us such graphic and faithful delineations. These are thoroughly fresh and real; they tell of the outdoor life he loved, and never smell of the study lamp, as Milton's and Spenser's allusions to plants, flowers, and other natural objects often do.

Volumes have been written on the plant-lore and garden-craft of Shakespeare; and the authors dwell equally on the poet's ingrained love of the country and his keen observation of natural phenomena and the agricultural practice of the time. Mr. Ellacombe, in his *Plant-lore of Shakespeare*, after quoting the dialogue of the Gardener and his servant in *Richard II.* (iii. 4. 29-66), where they draw lessons of political wisdom from the details of their occupation, remarks: "This most interesting passage would almost tempt us to say that Shakespeare was a gardener by profession; certainly no other passages that have been brought to prove his real profession are more minute than this. It proves him to have had practical experience in the work, and I think we may safely say that he was no mere 'prentice hand in the use of the pruning-knife." But this play was written in London, where, though city gardens were then common, and the suburbs were semi-rural, he could hardly have known anything

more of practical gardening than he had learned in his boyhood and youth at Stratford.

Grafting and the various ways of propagating plants by cuttings, slips, etc., are described or alluded to with equal accuracy; also the mischief done by weeds, blights, frosts, and other enemies of the husbandman and horticulturist. He writes on all these matters as we might expect him to have done in his last years at Stratford, after he had had actual experience in the management of a large garden at New Place and in farming operations on other lands he had bought in the neighbourhood; but all these passages, like the one quoted from *Richard II.*, were written long before he had a garden of his own. They were reminiscences of his observation as a boy, not the results of his experience as a country gentleman.

For its *historical* associations Warwickshire was no less the fitting region for the birth and education of a great national poet. From the time of the Roman occupation it had played an important part in the national history. Several Roman roads traversed this district, and Stratford got its name from the *ford* where one of these *streets* crossed the Avon. The sites of several Roman camps, or fortified stations, were in the neighbourhood, Alcester, one of these, being only five miles from Stratford. When the Saxons conquered the country they appear to have met with less resistance here than in the eastern part of England. As it

would seem, there was a gradual coalescing of the invaders with the natives rather than any fierce or prolonged struggle between them; so that this was "the district where, from an early period, the two race elements that have gone to the making of the nation were most nearly balanced and most completely blended."

In Anglo-Saxon times Warwickshire formed a part of the kingdom of Mercia, which was for a while the dominant power of the country. Later, from its central position, it naturally was traversed and occupied by the rival armies during the civil wars. The most important events in its annals before the time of Shakespeare occurred during the two greatest civil conflicts in the early history of the country — the Barons' War in the thirteenth century, and the Wars of the Roses in the fifteenth. The decisive battles that closed these long and bloody conflicts were both fought on the borders of Warwickshire, — the battle of Evesham on its southwestern boundary, and that of Bosworth Field on the northeastern. The great leaders in each struggle were directly connected with Warwickshire, Simon de Montfort, the founder of the House of Commons, and Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, the "King-maker."

The castles of Kenilworth and Warwick, which are to-day among the chief attractions of the district — the one stupendous in its dilapidation and decay; the other, as Scott described it, "that

fairest monument of ancient and chivalrous splendour which yet remains uninjured by time" — these mighty structures, fortresses and palaces in one, were, during those great wars, the main centres of military and political interest in England.

Kenilworth, in 1254, was given by Henry III. to Simon de Montfort, who had married Eleanor, the King's sister. De Montfort, who was now "in all but name a king," lived in regal state in the castle. Later he joined the rebellion against the King, and, with his eldest son, was killed at Evesham in 1265. His youngest son, Simon, vigorously defended Kenilworth, which was besieged by the royal forces for several months; but, when provisions gave out, it was compelled to surrender, and Henry gave it to his youngest son, Edward Earl of Lancaster, afterward created Earl of Leicester.

During the Wars of the Roses the castle was alternately taken by the partisans of the rival houses. In 1436 Henry V. kept his Christmas there. In 1562 (two years before the birth of Shakespeare) Elizabeth gave it to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, by whom the Queen was magnificently entertained in 1575.

That was a memorable occasion in the annals of Kenilworth and of Warwickshire. From July 9th to July 27th there was a succession of holiday pageants in the most sumptuous and elaborate style of the time, and it attracted spectators from all the country roundabout. Master Robert Laueham, whose



accuracy as a chronicler is not to be doubted, though he may have been, as Scott calls him, "as great a coxcomb as ever blotted paper," mentions, as a proof of the earl's hospitality, that "the clock bell rang not a note all the while her highness was there; the clock stood also still withal; the hands stood firm and fast, always pointing at two o'clock," the hour of banquet! The quantity of beer drunk on the occasion was 320 hogsheads, and the total expense of the entertainments is said to have been £1,000 (\$5,000) a day.

John Shakespeare, as a well-to-do citizen of Stratford, would be likely to see something of that stately show, and it is not improbable that he took his son William with him. The description in the *Midsummer-Night's Dream* (ii. 1. 150) of

"a mermaid on a dolphin's back  
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious sounds  
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,"

appears to be a reminiscence of certain features of the Kenilworth pageant. The minstrel Arion figured there, on a dolphin's back, singing of course; and Triton, "in the likeness of a mermaid," commanded the waves to be still; and among the fireworks there were shooting-stars that fell into the water, like the stars that, as Oberon adds,

"shot madly from their spheres  
To hear the sea-maid's music."

When Shakespeare was writing that early play, with its scenes in fairy-land, what more natural than that this youthful visit to what must then have seemed veritable fairy-land should recur to his memory and blend with the creations of his fancy?

Warwick Castle, which, according to tradition, was founded by Cymbeline, came into the possession of the Nevilles by the marriage of Richard the King-maker with Anne, daughter and heiress of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick. As has been intimated, the prominent part which that "setter-up and puller-down of kings" played in the making of history drew all eyes towards Warwick. He was the most conspicuous personage of those troublous times; and he was as munificent as he was mighty in statesmanship and war. The immense revenues from his patrimony were augmented by the income he derived from his various high offices in the state; but his wealth was scattered with a royal liberality. It is said that he daily fed thirty thousand people at his numerous mansions.

The Lady Anne of *Richard III.*, whom the hero of the play woos in such novel fashion, was the youngest daughter of the King-maker, born at Warwick Castle in 1452. She became the wife of Edward, Prince of Wales, son of Henry VI., who was slain at the battle of Tewkesbury.

The Earl of Warwick who figures in *2 Henry IV.*

was the Richard Beauchamp already mentioned as the father of Anne who became the wife of the King-maker. He appears again in the play of *Henry V.*, and also in the first scene of 1 *Henry VI.*, though he has nothing to say; and, as some believe, he (and not his son) is the Earl of Warwick in the rest of the play, in spite of certain historical difficulties which that theory involves. In 2 *Henry IV.* (iii. 1. 66) Shakespeare makes the mistake of calling him "Nevil" instead of Beauchamp.

The title of the Warwick earls became extinct with the death of the King-maker on the battlefield of Barnet. It was then bestowed on George, Duke of Clarence, who was drowned in the butt of wine by order of his loving brother Richard. It then passed to the young son of Clarence, who is another character in the play of *Richard III.* He, like his unfortunate father, was long imprisoned in the Tower, and ultimately murdered there after the farce of a trial on account of his alleged complicity in a plot against Henry VII.

Shakespeare claimed more than a general patriotic interest in the historical renown of his native country. When his father, in 1596, applied for a coat of arms, the draft granting it declared that an ancestor of his had fought for Henry VII. at Bosworth Field, by which the House of Tudor gained the throne. It is by no means certain that there was any good foundation for this claim, though it is not improbable that some member of the many families

bearing the name of Shakespeare may have done honourable service in the battle which terminated that long and bloody civil conflict.

But whether any of the poet's own ancestors fought at Bosworth Field or not, he "would be sure in his youth to hear, almost at first hand, a multitude of exciting stories and stirring incidents connected with so memorable and far-reaching a victory." The battle was fought only eight years before he was born, and, as Professor Baynes remarks, "public events of importance are vividly transmitted by local tradition for more than double that length of time." In that day the great events in the national history were popularly preserved and transmitted by means of oral tradition. Only the educated few could learn about them through literary chronicles and records. "The popular mind was of necessity largely fed and stimulated by the spoken narratives of the rustic festival and the winter fireside; and a quiet settled neighbourhood like Stratford, out of the crush, but near the great centres of national activity, would be peculiarly rich in these stored-up materials of unwritten history."

Warwickshire thus supplied the means of a liberal elementary education in the heroic annals of the past, and especially in the great events of the recent past, the final years of the Wars of the Roses. How well Shakespeare profited by that elementary education his subsequent work in dramatizing the history of this period may show. Writers of history have

testified to the value of his interpretation of it. Mr. Gairdner, in the preface to *The Houses of Lancaster and York*, says: "For this period of English history we are fortunate in possessing an unrivalled interpreter in our great dramatic poet Shakespeare. A regular sequence of historical plays exhibits to us, not only the general character of each successive reign, but nearly the whole chain of leading events from the days of Richard II. to the death of Richard III. at Bosworth. Following the guidance of such a master mind, we realize for ourselves the men and actions of the period in a way we cannot do in any other epoch. And this is the more important as the age itself, especially towards the close, is one of the most obscure in English history. During the period of the Wars of the Roses we have, comparatively speaking, very few contemporary narratives of what took place, and anything like a general history of the times was not written till a much later date. But the doings of that stormy age,—the sad calamities endured by kings—the sudden changes of fortune in great men—the glitter of chivalry and the horrors of civil war,—all left a deep impression upon the mind of the nation, which *was kept alive by vivid traditions of the past at the time that our great dramatist wrote*. Hence, notwithstanding the scantiness of records and the meagreness of ancient chronicles, we have singularly little difficulty in understanding the spirit and character of the times."

The legendary lore of the district was equally stimulating and inspiring to a poet. Warwickshire was eminently a field of romance and old heroic story and the scene of many an ancient ballad. Guy of Warwick was a foremost hero in this popular poetry, and his gigantic spectre still haunts the scenes of his traditional exploits. Learned antiquarians in these latter days have proved that, although he may have been a real personage, the adventures ascribed to him are mostly mythical, but the common people believe in him as of old. His sword, shield, and breastplate, which alone weighs more than fifty pounds, are preserved in the great hall of Warwick Castle, with his porridge-pot of metal holding more than a hundred gallons and the flesh-fork to match. The vulgar faith in these ponderous relics is not to be shaken, however prosaic skeptics may smile at it. No doubt Shakespeare in his boyhood believed it all; and he did not forget it in later life when he put allusions to Colbrand, the big Saracen whom Guy conquered and slew, into the mouths of certain characters in his plays.

Warwickshire was also prominent in the history of the English Drama. Coventry was renowned for the mediæval religious plays performed by the Grey Friars of its great monastery, and kept up, though with diminished pomp, even after the dissolution of their establishment. It was not until 1580 that these pageants were entirely suppressed; and Shakespeare, who was then sixteen years old, may have

been an eye-witness of the latest of them. No doubt he heard stories of their attractions in former times, when, as we are told by Dugdale, they were "acted with mighty state and reverence by the friars of this house, had theatres for the several scenes, very large and high, placed upon wheels, and drawn to all the eminent parts of the city for the better advantage of spectators; and contained the story of the New Testament composed into old English rhyme." There were forty-three of these ancient plays, performed by the monks until, as Tennyson puts it,

"Bluff Harry broke into the spence,  
And turned the cowls adrift."

When the boy Shakespeare saw them — if he did see them — they were played by the different guilds, or associations of tradespeople. Thus the Nativity and the Offering of the Magi, with the Flight into Egypt and the Slaughter of the Innocents, were rendered by the company of Shearmen and Tailors; the Smiths' pageant was the Crucifixion; that of the Cappers was the Resurrection; and so on. The account-books of the guilds are still extant, with charges for helmets for Herod and gear for his wife, for a beard for Judas and the rope to hang him, etc. In the accounts of the Smiths or Armourers we find record of expenditures for "schepskens for gods cote," a "pair of gloves for god," "the mendyng of Herods hed," and many other stage properties.

Herod, as is well known, was a very important character in these plays, and the manner in which he blustered and raged about the stage became proverbial. In *Hamlet* (iii. 2. 16) we have the expression, "It out-herods Herod;" and in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (ii. 1. 20), "What a Herod of Jewry is this!" In *Henry V.* (ii. 3. 43) there is an allusion to the "lost souls," who, as well as "saved souls," appeared in the play of the Last Judgment; the flea on Bardolph's rubicund nose being compared to "a black soul burning in hell-fire." These "souls" were dressed in black, or black and yellow, and were represented as disappearing in "hell-mouth," a huge and grotesque head of canvas, the jaws of which were made to open and shut and to vomit flames. In the books of the guilds are entries of money paid for "kepyng of fyer at hell mouthe," etc.

Shakespeare has other allusions to these old dramatical performances, proving that he knew them by report if he had not seen them.

Historical pageants, not Biblical in subject, were also familiar to the good people of Coventry a century at least before the dramatist was born. "The Nine Worthies," which he has burlesqued in *Love's Labour's Lost*, was acted there before Henry VI. and his queen in 1455. The original text of the play has been preserved, and portions of Shakespeare's travesty seem almost like a parody of it.

Stratford itself, as we have seen, was one of the



provincial towns which were favoured with the visits of travelling theatrical companies. The instance already mentioned (page 41) was the first of the kind recorded in the Stratford archives, and John Shakespeare, who was then high bailiff, may have invited them to come to the town. Perhaps he had a natural taste for the drama, and his son's bent in that direction may thus have been hereditary. However that may have been, this was the beginning of theatrical performances in Stratford, though in succeeding years they were frequent. Of course the young Shakespeare witnessed them; and we can surmise how they fired his imagination and fostered his inborn taste for the drama. This was an important part of his education which he might have entirely missed in ninety-nine out of a hundred little provincial towns in England.

We see, then, that all outward conditions in Stratford and its neighbourhood were peculiarly favourable to the awakening, stimulating, and developing of Shakespeare's genius. He himself could not have been wholly unconscious of this; and no wonder that he loved his native town, and that in London, notwithstanding the attractions and advantages of the metropolis, he steadily planned for his return to Stratford, buying the best house in the place, adding other lands to the estate, and finally coming back to spend the last years of his life there.

In his second home, where he spent more than

twenty-five years, including the whole of his career as an actor and author, he was equally fortunate. London was then, as now, the metropolis of the kingdom, the capital of arts and letters no less than of the national government.

It would be an insult to any intelligent reader to attempt telling why the city was the place of places for continuing his education. The mighty metropolis of to-day, with almost twenty times the population of that period, cannot gather so brilliant a company of poets and dramatists as used to meet at the Mermaid in Bread Street; to say nothing of the many other men of letters who thronged "the spacious times of great Elizabeth," and who either had their homes in the city or were frequent visitors there. What an age it was! And London was the centre of its literary activity and brilliancy. What stimulus, what inspiration must Shakespeare have found in its life and society! *He* might have said, with Beaumont in his letter to Ben Jonson:—

"What things have we seen  
Done at the Mermaid! Heard words that have been  
So nimble and so full of subtle flame  
As if that every one from whom they came  
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,  
And had resolved to live a fool the rest  
Of his dull life."

And this was but the diversion, the recreation of Shakespeare's daily life. The player and the dram-

atist then associated not only with the wits of his own circle and the congenial spirits who met with them at the Mermaid or the Falcon, but with noblemen and courtiers, with royalty itself. Elizabeth never visited the public theatres, but she often had Shakespeare's plays performed before her; and the tradition that he wrote *The Merry Wives of Windsor* at her command is not improbable.

The city itself was a great illustrated book of history—far more so than now when so many of its pages have been destroyed or defaced, when so many buildings connected with the people and the events of the past have disappeared and their very localities have become matters of doubt or dispute, owing to the Great Fire of 1666 and the extensive changes due to the growth of the city. Few remains and relics of the London of that day are now left, and, with all that ancient pictures and descriptions, and all that the patient researches of antiquarians can do to help us, it is impossible for us by any effort of the imagination to see Shakespeare's London as he saw it, or to understand how it must have moved and impressed him as a student of the history which he was destined to reproduce and interpret, not by adding to its musty annals, but by making it live again before our eyes.

Not to dwell longer on Shakespeare's education, we see that, though, so far as schooling, properly so called, was concerned, it was inferior to what a boy of thirteen or fourteen would have got nowadays, it

was in the broader sense far from inadequate as a preparation for the work he was to do as a poet and dramatist. Warwickshire was an admirable training-school for the boy, in the study of nature, history, and romance, as well as rural life and character; and London was a liberal education for the young man, not inferior, to say the least, to what Oxford or Cambridge might have given him.

## CHAPTER V.

### SHAKESPEARE'S MARRIAGE

WHAT Shakespeare did after leaving school we can only conjecture. It is not improbable that for some time he helped his father in some part of his business. Aubrey quotes a tradition that he taught school for a while. It is barely possible that he may have been a "pupil-teacher," so called, in the Stratford school. The tradition that he was bound apprentice to a butcher and later ran away to London is less probable. Yet another tradition makes him an attorney's clerk for a time; and the many references, literal and figurative, in his works to technicalities of the law, especially such as are not likely to become known to non-professional people, have led Lord Campbell and other specialists to believe that he must have studied law somewhat thoroughly; but Judge Allen, of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, in his recent *Notes on the Bacon-Shakespeare Question* (1900), has shown that such legal allusions are equally common in other dramatists of the time, and that Shakespeare, instead of being uniformly accurate in these matters, as Lord Campbell and others have assumed, is

often guilty of mistakes which a lawyer or student of law would never make. This may be regarded as the final word on the question of the supposed legal attainments of the dramatist.

The first indubitable fact in his life after leaving school which we know is that of his marriage, which occurred when he was between eighteen and nineteen years of age. The bride, Anne Hathaway, was about eight years older, as we infer from the inscription on her tombstone, which states that she died on the "6th day of August, 1623, being then of the age of 67 years." There is little reason to doubt that she was the daughter of Richard Hathaway, of Shottery, a village about a mile from Stratford.

Richard Hathaway's will was drawn up on the 1st of September, 1581, and was duly proved July 9th, 1582, probably a short time after his death, the exact date of which is unknown. Seven children are mentioned in the document, Bartholomew, Thomas, John, William, Agnes, Catharine, and Margaret. Anne Hathaway was probably the "Agnes" of the will, as the two names were then interchangeable. Thomas Hathaway's daughter Agnes, mentioned in Richard's will, is called Anne twice in the parish register. In the Bishopton register we find "Thomas Greene and Agnes his wife" and later "Thomas Greene and Anne his wife," clearly referring to the same people. The wife of Phillip Henslowe, who is called Agnes in his will, appears as Anne

in the entry of her funeral at Dulwich, and also, according to Aubrey, in the inscription on her gravestone. A tourist of the 17th century, transcribing an inscription in the Stratford church, unconsciously deviates from the original thus: "here lyeth the bodyes of William Clopton, Esquier, and Anne his wife . . . the said Agnes deceased 17 of September, 1596." *Nancy* was sometimes used for both *Anne* and *Agnes*; and *Anmys*, *Annes*, *Anneys*, *Annyce*, etc., are merely old forms of *Anne*.

The house at Shottery known as "Anne Hathaway's Cottage" is believed to have been the dwelling of Richard Hathaway; and the trustees of the Stratford Birthplace purchased it in 1892 for preservation as another memorial of the poet. It must be confessed, however, that the tradition which connects it with his wife is comparatively recent. Halliwell-Phillipps says:—

"The earliest notice of its presumed locality is in an unpublished version of Rowe's biography that was compiled about the year 1750 by the Rev. Joseph Greene, then master of the grammar school at Stratford, in which, *as originally written*, occurs the following paragraph: 'His (Shakespeare's) wife was the daughter of one Hathaway, a substantial yeoman in the neighbourhood of Stratford, probably of a place about a mile from thence call'd *Luddington*, where a *substantial* family of *that name and occupation still reside*;' the manner in which the name of that hamlet is introduced showing that

the attribution was conjectural. That this was the case is also apparent from revisions that were afterwards made by Greene, who erased the italicized words in the concluding sentences of the above quotation rewriting them in these terms: 'probably *at that place about half a mile from thence call'd Shotteriche, where a creditable family of the name aforemention'd 'till within these few years resided.*' The retention of the word *probably* appears to exclude what might otherwise have been the inference, that the alterations were the result of a more careful investigation; but the same writer, nevertheless, in a subsequent memorandum accepts the Shottery theory as an established fact: 'As Shakespear, the poet, married his wife Hathaway from Shottery, a village near Stratford-upon-Avon, possibly he might become possessor of a remarkable house there as part of her portion, and, jointly with his wife, convey it as part of their daughter Judith's portion to Thomas Queeny;— it is certain that one Queeny, an elderly gentleman, sold it to . . . Harvey esq., of Stockton, near Southam, Warwickshire, father of John Harvey Thursby, esq., of Abington, near Northampton, and that the aforesaid Harvey sold it again to Samuel Tyler, Esq., whose sisters, as his heirs, now enjoy it' (note by Greene written on July the 4th, 1770). This Quiney hypothesis is disproved by the passages in Shakespeare's will that refer to Judith, and there is no probability that he was ever the owner of the



house here mentioned, and which, it is hardly necessary to observe, is not the Anne Hathaway Cottage of the present day.

“The earliest reference to the present Anne Hathaway's Cottage under that title is that found in Ireland's *Picturesque Views on the Warwickshire Avon*, 1795, in which work there is an engraving of the dwelling introduced by the following observations: ‘The cottage in which she is said to have lived with her parents is yet standing, and although I have doubts as to the truth of the relation, I have yet given a faithful representation of it in the annexed view; — it is still occupied by the descendants of her family, who are poor and numerous; — to this same humble cottage I was referred, when pursuing the same inquiry, by the late Mr. Harte of Stratford,’ the person last named, who died in 1793, being a descendant from the poet's sister. With the exception of an inferior lithograph circulated by Green about the year 1820, no further notice of the house appears to have been submitted to the public until 1828, in which year excellent views of it were issued by Rider, and the late R. B. Wheler, in a manuscript note written about 1830, speaks of the then ‘generally believed tradition’ that it was ‘the identical one from which Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway,’ adding in confirmation that ‘the Hathaway's family certainly resided at Shottery at that period.’ This latter writer, however, does not mention such a belief in either his

*History of Stratford*, 1809, or in his *Guide*, 1814, while from a notice of Shottery, compiled from his memoranda and published in 1820, it is obvious that he had personally no faith in its validity."

The difficulty in settling the question is due to the fact that there were at least three Hathaway families in Shottery at the time of Richard Hathaway's death, and it is not easy to disentangle their histories with the help of the parish records and other accessible sources of information. We may infer, however, that, before deciding to pay an exorbitant price for the house, the trustees of the Birthplace made a careful examination of the evidence in favour of its identity, and came to the conclusion that it was no more doubtful than that of the house in Henley Street.

Perplexing questions have also arisen concerning the marriage of William and Anne. Just when or where it was solemnized we do not know. There is no record of it in the Stratford registers, and none has been discovered elsewhere. It probably took place early in December, 1582, and in one of the neighbouring parishes, the records of which have been lost. The tradition that Luddington, a few miles from Stratford, was the place, though of comparatively recent date, is not improbable, as Thomas Hunt, one of Shakespeare's schoolmasters (page 46), was then vicar of that parish.

The date of the marriage is approximately fixed by a bond authorizing it which is still extant in the

episcopal archives of Worcester, to which diocese Stratford and Shottery belonged. In this bond, dated November 28th, 1582, Fulk Sandells and John Richardson of Shottery (both of whom are mentioned in Richard Hathaway's will) bind themselves in a surety of £40 that "William Shagspere" and "Anne Hathwey" may "lawfully solemnize matrimony together, and in the same afterwarde remaine and continew like man and wiffe, according unto the lawes in that behalf provided; and, moreover, if there be not at this present time any action, sute, quarrell or demaund moved or depending before any judge, ecclesiasticall or temporall, for and concerning any suche lawfull lett or impediment; and, moreover, if the said William Shagspere do not proceed to solemnizacion of mariadg with the said Anne Hathwey without the consent of hir frindes; and also if the said William do, upon his owne proper costes and expenses, defend and save harmles the right reverend Father in God, Lord John Bushop of Worcester, and his offycers, for licencing them the said William and Anne to be married together with once asking of the bannes of matrimony betwene them, and for all other causes which may ensue by reason or occasion therof, that then the said obligacion to be voyd and of none effect, or els to stand and abide in full force and vertue."

Similar bonds, permitting the marriage ceremony to be expedited while "protecting the clergy from

the consequences of any possible breach of canonical law" are found in the diocesan registers of that period; but the wording of this one, according to Sidney Lee, "differs in important respects from that adopted in all other known examples." He adds: "In the case of the marriage of an 'infant' bridegroom the formal consent of his parents was absolutely essential to strictly regular procedure, although clergymen might be found who were ready to shut their eyes to the facts of the situation and to run the risk of solemnizing the marriage of an 'infant' without inquiry as to the parents' consent. . . . Despite the circumstances that Shakespeare's bride was of full age and he himself was by nearly three years a minor, the bond stipulated merely for the consent of the bride's 'friends,' and ignored the bridegroom's parents altogether. Nor was this the only irregularity in the document. In other pre-matrimonial covenants of the kind, the name either of the bridegroom himself or of the bridegroom's father figures as one of the two sureties, and is mentioned first of the two. . . . The prominence of the Shottery husbandmen in the negotiations suggests the true position of affairs. Sandells and Richardson, representing the lady's family, doubtless secured the deed on their own initiative, so that Shakespeare might have small opportunity of evading a step which his intimacy with their friend's daughter had rendered essential to her reputation. The wedding probably took place,

without the consent of the bridegroom's parents, — it may be without their knowledge, — soon after the signing of the deed.”

That the bond was given without the consent of Shakespeare's parents is probably true, though it is quite certain that neither John Shakespeare nor William at that time could have furnished the forty pounds required as surety. It was necessary to find other bondsmen, and it was natural that they should be sought among the friends of the Hathaways at Shottery. There is not a particle of evidence that William was disposed to “evade” making honourable amends for the wrong he had done the lady. If he had had any such inclination, he could have run away to London, as Aubrey heard that he did when apprenticed to the butcher.

Some have thought that the “smart” young woman of twenty-four entrapped the boy of eighteen into this match which, from a worldly point of view, was so imprudent. Lord Campbell says that Anne was “no better than she should be,” and De Quincey feels sure that William must have been drawn on by Anne and her family, or at least that his attentions were all too readily accepted. But William Shakespeare at eighteen was not the guileless country youth that this theory assumes, and he would have disdained to make any such excuse for his conduct. We cannot doubt that he was more to blame for the hurried marriage than Anne Hathaway.

There are those, however, who believe that no special blame attaches to either of them, and that the bond authorizing the marriage with "once asking of the bans" does not justify us in considering the case either exceptional or exceptionable. They assume that William and Anne had been formally betrothed several months before the marriage; and they tell us that this "precontract" was legally recognized as equivalent to marriage. It was certainly a legal bar to a subsequent union of either of the parties with another person, unless by their common consent; and it unquestionably came to be considered, at least among the lower classes, as conferring the rights and privileges of the more formal ceremony that was to follow. There may have been such a precontract in this instance. In the absence of any positive evidence to the contrary, it is no more than fair to allow Shakespeare the benefit of the doubt. Those who are not willing to do this assert that the consent of the parents of both parties was necessary to this formal betrothal; but Halliwell-Phillipps has shown that, while this was the rule, it was not without exceptions. He says: "This ceremony was generally a solemn affair enacted with the immediate concurrence of all the parents, but it was at times informally conducted separately by the betrothing parties, evidence of the fact, communicated by them to independent persons, having been held, at least in Warwickshire, to confer a sufficient legal validity on the

transaction. Thus, in 1585, William Holder and Alice Shaw, having privately made a contract, came voluntarily before two witnesses, one of whom was a person named Willis and the other a John Maides of Snitterfield, on purpose to acknowledge that they were irrevocably pledged to wedlock. The lady evidently considered herself already as good as married, saying to Holder, 'I do confesse that I am your wief and have forsaken all my frendes for your sake, and I hope you will use me well;' and thereupon she 'gave him her hand.' Then, as Maides observes, 'the said Holder, *mutatis mutandis*, used the like words unto her in effect, and toke her by the hand, and kissed together in the presence of this deponent and the said Willis.' These proceedings are afterwards referred to in the same depositions as constituting a definite 'contract of marriage.' On another occasion, in 1588, there was a precontract meeting at Alcester, the young lady arriving there unaccompanied by any of her friends. When requested to explain the reason of this omission, 'she answered that her leasure wold not lett her and that she thought she cold not obtaine her mother's goodwill, but, quoth she, neverthelesse I am the same woman that I was before.' The future bridegroom was perfectly satisfied with this assurance, merely asking her 'whether she was content to betake herself unto him, and she answered, offring her hand, which he also tooke upon thoffer that she was content by her trothe, and thereto, said she, I

geve thee my faith, and before these witnesses, that I am thy wief; and then he likewise answered in theis wordes, vidz., and I geve thee my faith and troth, and become thy husband.' These instances, to which several others could be added, prove decisively that Shakespeare could have entered, under any circumstances whatever, into a precontract with Anne Hathaway. It may be worth adding that espousals of this kind were, in the Midland counties, almost invariably terminated by the lady's acceptance of a bent sixpence. One lover, who was betrothed in the same year in which Shakespeare was engaged to Anne Hathaway, gave also a pair of gloves, two oranges, two handkerchiefs and a girdle of broad red silk. A present of gloves on such an occasion was, indeed, nearly as universal as that of a sixpence."

According to Bishop Watson (*Doctrine of the Seven Sacraments*, 1558), persons who were betrothed in this formal way were "perfectly married together," although, as he adds, "the marriage of them in the face of the Church afterward, by the ministration of the priest, is not superfluous, but much expedient for sundry causes." Even if there had been an informality in the precontract, the offence supposed to have been committed by Shakespeare would have been in itself a condition that rendered the arrangement legally valid (Swinburne's *Treatise of Spousals*, 1686).

It will be noticed that in the instances of betrothal



cited by Halliwell-Phillipps the parties call each other "husband" and "wife." Similarly Shakespeare's maternal grandfather, Robert Arden, when settling part of an estate upon his daughter Agnes, July 17th, 1550, refers to her as "nunc uxor Thome Stringer, ac nuper uxor Johannis Hewyns" (now the wife of Thomas Stringer, and lately the wife of John Hewyns), though she was not married to Stringer until three months afterwards, according to the entry in the Beasley register: "1550, 15 October, was maryed Thomas Stringer unto Agnes Hwens, wyddow."

Shakespeare, who has introduced the formal betrothal repeatedly in his plays, similarly makes Olivia call Sebastian "husband" before she is married to him. In iv. 3, Olivia enters with a Priest, and meets Sebastian, when this dialogue ensues: —

*Olivia.* Blame not this haste of mine. If you mean  
well,

Now go with me, and with this holy man,  
Into the chantry by; there, before him,  
And underneath that consecrated roof,  
Plight me the full assurance of your faith;  
That my most jealous and too doubtful soul  
May live at peace. He shall conceal it,  
Whiles you are willing it shall come to note,  
What time we will our celebration keep  
According to my birth. — What do you say?

*Sebastian.* I'll follow this good man, and go with you,  
And, having sworn truth, ever will be true.

*Olivia.* Then lead the way, good father ; and heavens  
so shine,  
That they may fairly note this act of mine ! [*Exeunt.*”

Later (v. 1.), when Olivia mistakes the disguised Viola for the man to whom she has been betrothed, and charges the supposed young man with having “beguiled” her, the Priest is called in to bear witness to the ceremony that has taken place:—

“*Olivia.* Ah me ! detested ! how am I beguiled !

*Viola.* Who does beguile you ? who does do you  
wrong ?

*Olivia.* Hast thou forgot thyself ? Is it so long ?  
Call forth the holy father ! [*Exit an Attendant.*

*Duke.* [*To VIOLA*] Come away.

*Olivia.* Whither, my lord ? — Cesario, husband, stay.

*Duke.* Husband ?

*Olivia.* Ay, husband : can he that deny ?

*Duke.* Her husband, sirrah ?

*Viola.* No, my lord, not I.

*Olivia.* Alas ! it is the baseness of thy fear  
That makes thee strangle thy propriety.  
Fear not, Cesario, take thy fortunes up ;  
Be that thou know'st thou art, and then thou art  
As great as that thou fear'st.

*Re-enter Attendant with the Priest.*

O, welcome, father !

Father, I charge thee, by thy reverence,  
Here to unfold — though lately we intended  
To keep in darkness what occasion now

Reveals before 'tis ripe — what thou dost know  
Hath newly pass'd between this youth and me.

*Priest.* A contract of eternal bond of love,  
Confirm'd by mutual joinder of your hands,  
Attested by the holy close of lips,  
Strengthen'd by interchangement of your rings,  
And all the ceremony of this compact  
Seal'd in my function, by my testimony ;  
Since when, my watch hath told me, toward my grave  
I have travell'd but two hours."

Sidney Lee, who denies that the betrothal or "troth-plight" ever "carried with it all the privileges of marriage," remarks: "In *Measure for Measure* Claudio's offence is intimacy with the Lady Julia [*sic*] after the contract of betrothal and before the formality of marriage." It is true that the unrighteous deputy Angelo interprets the ancient law in that way; but Claudio defends himself thus: —

"Upon a true contract  
I got possession of Julietta's bed.  
You know the lady : she is fast my wife,  
Save that we do the denunciation lack  
Of outward order ; this we came not to."

And later the Duke, disguised as a friar, justifies Mariana in taking the place of Isabella in the nocturnal visit to Angelo on the ground of the pre-contract between them : —

"He is your husband on a pre-contract.  
To bring you thus together, 'tis no sin,

Sith that the justice of your title to him  
Doth flourish the deceit."

Karl Elze, after quoting this, says: "On the other hand, in *The Winter's Tale* (i. 2. 278), Leontes says of his wife that she deserves a name

'As rank as any flax-wench that puts to  
Before her troth-plight.'

He either takes the "troth-plight" to mean the marriage, instead of the betrothal, to which it really refers, or he strangely fails to note that the act is supposed to occur "before" the betrothal, not after it, as in the case of Angelo and Mariana.

To add to the perplexing questions connected with Shakespeare's marriage, an entry has been discovered in the episcopal register at Worcester, according to which a license for the marriage of "William Shakespeare and Anna Whately of Temple Grafton" was issued on the 27th of November, 1582, the day before the signing of the Hathaway bond. Certain of the Baconian heretics have argued from this that Anne Hathaway was a widow, when Shakespeare married her; but, as Halliwell-Phillipps remarks, the bond is "of course of infinitely higher authority than the entry, and Temple Grafton is not one of the hamlets of Stratford," as Shottery is. He believes that "the scribe, through some exceptional accident, must have miswritten" the latter part of the entry.

Sidney Lee, on the other hand, believes that the William Shakespeare of the entry was another of the many persons of that name in the diocese of Worcester.

Mrs. Stopes suggests yet another explanation: "Travelling was inconvenient on November roads; Will set off for the license alone, as bridegrooms were often wont to do, when they could afford the expense of a special license. He might give his own name, and that of his intended wife, at a temporary address. The clerk made an error in the spelling [of her name], which might have been corrected, but meanwhile discovered that Shakespeare was under age, was acting without his parents — that the bride was not in her own home, and that no marriage settlement was in the air. No risk might be run by an official in such a case; the license was stayed; sureties must be found for a penalty in case of error. So poor Will would have to find, in post-haste, the nearest friends he could find to trust him and his story. And whom so likely to ask as Fyvk Sandells and John Richardson, friends of the Hathaways? They might have been at Worcester market with him."

A daughter was born to the young couple before the end of the next May, being baptized with the name Susanna on Sunday, May 26th, 1583; and twin children, Hamnet and Judith, less than two years afterwards (baptized February 2d, 1585), or about two months before their father was twenty-one.

## CHAPTER VI.

### AT STRATFORD AFTER THE MARRIAGE

OF Shakespeare's life from the date of his marriage to his departure for London nothing is positively known except the facts already mentioned concerning the baptism of his three children; and the most important tradition of the period is that of his poaching in Sir Thomas Lucy's park at Charlecote, which is by no means improbable.

Rowe tells the story thus: "He had, by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company, and, amongst them, some, that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing, engaged him with them more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote, near Stratford; — for this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely, and, in order to revenge that ill-usage, he made a ballad upon him; and though this, probably the first essay of his poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter that it redoubled the prosecution against him to that degree that he was obliged to leave his business and his family in War-







wickshire for some time, and shelter himself in London."

Another version is given by Archdeacon Davies, according to whom the dramatist was "much given to all unluckiness in stealing venison and rabbits, particularly from Sir Thomas Lucy, who had him oft whipped and sometimes imprisoned, and at last made him fly his native county to his great advancement; but his revenge was so great that he is his Justice Clodpate, and calls him a great man, and that in allusion to his name bore three louses rampant for his arms." It is evident, therefore, from the independent testimonies of Rowe and Davies, that the deer-stealing story was accepted in the poet's native town and in the neighbourhood during the latter part of the seventeenth century. "That it has a solid basis of fact cannot admit of a reasonable doubt. It was current at a period in the history of Shakespearean appreciation before tales of the kind became liable to intentional falsification, and the impressive story of the penniless fugitive, who afterwards became a leading inhabitant of Stratford and the owner of New Place, was one likely to be handed down with passable fidelity to the grandchildren of his contemporaries" (Halliwell-Phillipps).

Some critics have endeavoured to prove that there was no deer-park at Charlecote at that time; and there may have been none in the legal acceptation of the term. Blackstone says: "It is not every

field or common, which a gentleman pleases to surround with a wall or paling, and to stock with a herd of deer, that is thereby constituted a legal park." Probably Sir Thomas was the originator of the present deer-park, as he was the originator of the still existing mansion, and started his deer-park in a small way at first. The laying out of deer-parks and making enclosures was a fashion prevailing at the time. Holinshed dwells upon the injurious custom of enclosures and expressly says: "Nobles and gentlemen furnished the same with beasts and sheepe and also deere." It is very likely that Sir Thomas at first had only a warren, into which he gradually introduced deer as well. It will be noted that, according to Davies, Shakespeare stole "venison and rabbits." Besides, Lucy had other estates in the neighbourhood, on some of which he employed game-keepers, and in March, 1585, about the date of the alleged poaching, he introduced a bill into Parliament for the better preservation of game, which he would not be likely to have done if he had not been personally interested in the matter. Perhaps, as has been suggested, the depredations of Shakespeare and his companions may have been the cause of Sir Thomas's anxiety to have the new law enacted.

The strongest argument in favour of the tradition is to be based on the evidence furnished by the plays that Shakespeare had a grudge against Sir Thomas, and caricatured him as Justice Shallow

(Davies's "Justice Clodpate") in 2 *Henry IV.* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor.* The reference in the latter play to the "dozen white luces" on Shallow's coat of arms is palpably meant to suggest the three luces, or pikes, in the arms of the Lucys. The manner in which the dialogue dwells on the device indicates that some personal satire was intended.

It should be understood that poaching was then regarded, except by the victims of it, as a venial offence. Sir Philip Sidney's *May Lady* calls deer-stealing "a prettie service." The students at Oxford were the most notorious poachers in the kingdom, in spite of laws making expulsion from the university the penalty of detection. Froude says: "No English peasant could be convinced that there was any moral crime in appropriating the wild game. It was an offence against statute law, but no offence against natural law; and it was rather a trial of skill between the noble who sought to monopolize a right which seemed to be common to all, and those who would succeed, if they could, in securing their share of it." Reynolds, who wrote against the theatre in 1599, classes the stealing of deer and of fruit together as equal offences. In *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* (1608) we have a case of poaching, in which even the parson, Sir John, takes part, and which all those who had a hand in it frankly proclaim a merry, successful joke. In Dodsley it is said of the parson: "the stove priest steals more venison than half the country." Another poaching

priest, who hunted rabbits on a large scale, we meet with in *A Hundred Merry Tales*. In *The Hector of Germanie* (1615) the page says: "I hold it [my office] not by patent, for term of life, nor for years: but as young gentlemen get venison upon sufferance, or by stealth."

Apropos of the Oxford students, Dr. Forman tells how two of them in 1573 (one of whom afterwards became Bishop of Worcester) were more given to such pursuits than to study; and one good man lamented in later life that he had missed the advantages that others had derived from these exploits, which he believed to be an excellent discipline for young men.

We must not assume that Sir Thomas was fairly represented in the character of Justice Shallow. On the contrary, he appears to have been an able man and magistrate, and very genial withal. The Stratford records bear frequent testimony to his judicial services; and his attendance on such occasions is generally coupled with a charge for claret and sack or similar beverages. It is rather amusing that these entries occur even when he is sitting in judgment on tipplers. In the records for 1586 we read: "Paid for wine and sugar when Sir Thomas Lucy sat in commission for tipplers, xx.*d.*"

That he was a good husband we may infer from the long epitaph of his wife in Charlecote Church, which reads thus: "Here intombed lyeth the Lady Joyce Lucy, wife of Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecot,

in the county of Warwick, knight, daughter and heire of Thomas Acton of Sutton in the county of Worster, esquire, who departed out of this wretched world to her heavenly kingdom the x.th day of February, in the yere of our Lord God, 1595, and of her age lx. and three: all the tyme of her lyfe a true and faythfull servant of her good God, never detected of any cryme or vice; in religion moste sounde; in love to her husband moste faythfull and true; in freindship moste constant; to what in trust was committed unto her moste secret; in wisdom excellling; in governing of her howse and bringing up of youth in the feare of God that did convers with her, moste rare and singuler. A great maintayner of hospitality; greatly esteemed of her betters; misliked of none unles of the envious. When all is spoken that can be saide, a wooman so furnished and garnished with vertue as not to be bettered, and hardly to be equaled by any. As shee lived moste vertuously, so shee died moste godly. Set downe by him that best did knowe what hath byn written to be true, *Thomas Lucye.*"

On the other hand, her son-in-law, Edward Aston — who, however, may be a prejudiced witness — says, in a confidential letter to a friend, that her ladyship was a thorough vixen.

Other traditions represent Shakespeare as given to wild courses at this period of his life, but they are of more recent date, and probably have little or no foundation in fact. The only one of them worth

mentioning here is that of the "Bidford challenge," as it is called. The earliest form of this legend dates back to 1762, when a gentleman who visited Stratford relates that the host of the White Lion Inn took him to Bidford, a neighbouring village, where, to quote his own words, "he shewed me in the hedge a crab-tree called 'Shakespear's Canopy,' because under it our poet slept one night; for he, as well as Ben Johnson, loved a glass for the pleasure of society; and he, having heard much of the men of that village as deep drinkers and merry fellows, one day went over to Bidford to take a cup with them; — he enquired of a shepherd for the Bidford drinkers, who replied they were absent, but the Bidford sippers were at home, and, I suppose, continued the sheepkeeper, they will be sufficient for you; and so, indeed, they were; — he was forced to take up his lodging under that tree for some hours" (*British Magazine*, June, 1762).

If there was any truth in the story, this first version doubtless contains it; but it was afterwards absurdly amplified and embellished by John Jordan, a Stratford poet, in a manuscript of about the year 1770, from which the following is an extract: "There were two companys or fraternities of Village Yeomanry who used frequently to associate together at Bidford a town pleasantly situate on the banks of the Avon about 7 Miles below Stratford, and Who boasted themselves Superior in the Science of drinking to any set of equal number in the King-

dom and hearing the fame of our Bard it was determined to Challenge him and his Companions to a tryal of their skill which the Stratfordians accepted and accordingly repaired to Bidford which place agreeable to both parties was to be the Scene of Contenttion. But when Shakespeare and his Companions arrived at the destined spot, to their disagreeable disapointment they found the Topers were gone to Evesham fair and were told that if they had a mind to try their strenght with the Sippers, they were ther ready for the Contest, Shakesp<sup>r</sup> and his compainions made a Scoff at their Opponents but for want of better Company they agreed to the Contest and in a little time our Bard and his Compainions got so intollerable intoxicated that they was not able to Contend any longer and accordingly set out on their return to Stratford But had not got above half a mile on the road e'er the found themselves unable to proceed any farther, and was obliged to lie down under a Crabtree which is still growing by the side of the road where they took up their repose till morning when some of the Company roused the poet and intreated him to return to Bidford and renew the Contest he declined it saying I have drank with —

‘Piping Pebworth, Dancing Marston,  
 Haunted Hillborough, and Hungry Grafton,  
 With Dadging Exhall, Papist Wixford,  
 Beggarly Broom, and Drunken Bidford.’ ”

Jordan may have written this doggerel, but certainly Shakespeare never did. The names are those of neighbouring villages. Two other accounts which were printed, respectively, in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for December, 1794, and in Ireland's *Views on the Warwickshire Avon*, are known to have been from materials furnished by Jordan. Other versions have been invented more recently. In Brewer's *Description of the County of Warwick* (1820), for instance, we are told that "those who repeat the tradition in the neighbourhood of Stratford invariably assert that the whole party slept undisturbed from Saturday night till the following Monday morning, when they were roused by workmen going to their labour." According to an improved version of this form of the anecdote, so completely had the previous day been effaced from the sleeper's memory that, when he woke up, he rebuked a field labourer in the vicinity for his desecration of the Sabbath.

Professor Baynes, commenting on this period in the life of the dramatist, says: "In its modern form the story of the Bidford challenge exploit may indeed be little better than a myth. But in substance it is by no means incredible, and if we knew all about the incident we should probably find there were other points to be tested between the rival companies besides strength of head to resist the effects of the well-known Bidford beer. The prompt refusal to return with his companions and renew the



contest on the following day, — a decision playfully expressed and emphasized in the well-known doggerel lines, — implies that in Shakespeare's view such forms of good fellowship were to be accepted on social not self-indulgent grounds, that they were not to be resorted to for the sake of the lower accessories only, or allowed to grow into evil habits from being unduly repeated or prolonged. It is clear that this general principle of recreative and adventurous enterprise, announced more than once in his writings, guided his own conduct even in the excitable and impulsive season of youth and early manhood. If he let himself go, as he no doubt sometimes did, it was only as a good rider on coming to the turf gives the horse his head in order to enjoy the exhilaration of a gallop, having the bridle well in hand the while, and able to rein in the excited steed at a moment's notice. It may be said of Shakespeare at such seasons, as of his own Prince Hal, that he —

‘Obscured his contemplation

Under the veil of wildness ; which, no doubt,  
Grew like the summer grass, fastest by night,  
Unseen, yet cressive in his faculty.’”

The same writer suggests that Sir Thomas Lucy may have been prejudiced against the Shakespeares on religious grounds, and that this feeling may have prompted him to a display of exceptional severity

against their eldest son. He was an extreme and bigoted Protestant, and his bitterness against the Romanists had lately been intensified by the conspiracy of the Ardens of Park Hall against the queen's life. John Somerville, the son of Edward Arden, instigated by the family priest, had started for London with the purpose of assassinating Elizabeth with his own hand, but was arrested on the way and conveyed to the Tower, where, under threat of torture, he made a confession, implicating his father-in-law and the priest. All three were tried and convicted. Somerville committed suicide, and Edward Arden was hanged. These events made a deep impression in Warwickshire, and no one would be more excited by them than Lucy. His vindictive feeling against the Romanists led him a little later to bring forward a motion in Parliament in favour of devising some new and lingering tortures for the execution of the Romanist conspirator Parry. As Mr. Froude puts it, "Sir Thomas Lucy, — Shakespeare's Lucy, the original perhaps of Justice Shallow, with an English fierceness at the bottom of his stupid nature, — having studied the details of the execution of Gerard, proposed in the House of Commons 'that some new law should be devised for Parry's execution, such as might be thought fittest for his extraordinary and horrible treason.'" The Ardens were devoted Romanists; the terrible calamity that had befallen the family occurred only a short time before the

deer-stealing adventure; and the Shakespeares themselves, so far from being Puritans, were suspected by many of being but indifferent Protestants. John Shakespeare was an irregular attendant at church, and soon ceased to appear there at all, so that Sir Thomas Lucy probably regarded him as little better than a recusant. "In any case Sir Thomas would be likely to resent the elder Shakespeare's convivial turn and profuse hospitality as alderman and bailiff, and especially his official patronage of the players and active encouragement of their dramatic representations in the Guild hall. The Puritans had a rooted antipathy to the stage, and to the jaundiced eye of the local justice the reverses of the Shakespeares would probably appear as a judgment on their way of life. He would all the more eagerly seize any chance of humiliating their eldest son, who still held up his head and dared to look upon life as a scene of cheerful activity and occasional enjoyment. The young poet, indeed, embodied the very characteristics most opposed to Sir Thomas's dark and narrow conceptions of life and duty. His notions of public duty were very much restricted to persecuting the Romanists and preserving the game on Protestant estates. And Shakespeare probably took no pains to conceal his want of sympathy with these supreme objects of aristocratic and Puritanical zeal. And Sir Thomas, having at length caught him, as he imagined, in a technical trespass, would be sure to pursue the

culprit with the unrelenting rigour of his hard and gloomy nature."

Mrs. Stopes, who has no faith in the deer-stealing tradition, suggests that "it is much more than likely that Shakespeare was concerned in the religious turmoil of the time, was somewhat suspected, and was indignant at the cruel treatment of Edward Arden;" and that this, rather than any fear of persecution by Lucy for poaching, may have had something to do with his leaving Warwickshire.

It is a curious fact that a copy of the 1619 quarto edition of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was discovered a few years ago among the family records at Charlecote Hall — the only copy of any one of Shakespeare's plays in the early editions found there. Dowden, referring to this, says: "If it is any satisfaction to us we have some reason to believe that the barb prepared for Sir Thomas Lucy struck home, and that the family did not forget the mockery of their old coat;" but as Sir Thomas died in 1600, he could not himself have bought or seen this edition of 1619, nor even the first edition, which did not appear until 1602. He may, however, have heard of the play and of Justice Shallow before his death, as it was probably written as early as 1599. The title-page of the first quarto tells us that it had been "divers times acted by the Right Honourable the Lord Chamberlaines servants both before her Majestie and elsewhere."

How William managed to support his family at

this time we have no means of knowing. It is improbable that he set up housekeeping for himself, and it is equally improbable that he made his home at Henley Street. His father's fortunes were declining, and there were four younger children to be taken care of: Gilbert, baptized October 13th, 1566; Joan, April 15th, 1569; Richard, March 11th, 1573-4; and Edmund, May 3d, 1580. Anne, baptized September 28th, 1571, had died in the spring of 1579, the record of her burial being dated April 4th in that year. Some have suggested that William and his family lived with the Hathaways at Shottery, and that Anne and her children remained there when the young man went to seek his fortune in London. Her widowed mother may have been glad to have her daughter and grandchildren with her in the large and comfortable house left to her by her husband's will; for that document, after certain bequests to his children and others, concludes thus: "This bequeast donne, debts paide, and legacies leaved, and my bodye honestlie buried, then I gyve and bequeathe all the rest of my goodes, moveable and unmoveable, unto Joane, my wief, whome I make my sole executrix to see this my last will and testament trulye performed." The house, though long known as a "cottage," was really "a substantial thatched farmhouse of the Elizabethan period" (Halliwell-Phillipps). In the latter part of the eighteenth century it was converted into two tenements, and later into three.

John Shakespeare's bad luck appears to have begun some time after he bought the houses in 1575 for £40. He must then have been prosperous, with money to invest in real estate. We learn nothing about his affairs in 1576 and 1577, but early in 1578 his circumstances were less flourishing. The town council on the 29th of January in that year made a levy on the people for the purchase of military accoutrements. It was agreed that "every alderman, except suche under-wrytten excepted, shall paye" 6s. 8d.; but two aldermen, "Mr. Plumley" and "Mr. Shaxpeare," were excepted, the former paying only 5s. and the latter only 3s. 4d. The will of Roger Sadler, a baker of Stratford, in November, 1578, mentions a "debte of Mr. John Shaksper" for £5. On the 19th of the same month, it was ordered by the town council that "every alderman shall paye weekly towardes the releif of the poore iiij.d. savinge Mr. John Shaxpeare and Mr. Robert Bratt, who shall not be taxed to pay anythinge." The estate of Asbies was lost forever to John and Mary Shakespeare in that same month of November, when they mortgaged it to Edward Lambert as security for a loan of £40. This transaction occurred only five days before the vote in the town council just mentioned, the mortgage having been effected on the 14th.

On the 11th of March, 1579, when another tax was levied "for the purchase of armour and defensive weapons," John Shakespeare is recorded among

the defaulters, being unable to pay his 3s. 4d. On the 15th of October, in that year, John and his wife disposed of their interests in Snitterfield for £4. This interest "consisted of a share in a considerable landed estate that had belonged to the poet's maternal grandfather, — a share to which John and Mary Shakespeare would have become absolutely entitled upon the death of Agnes Arden, who was described as 'aged and impotent' in the July of the following year, 1580, and who died a few months afterwards, her burial at Aston Cantlowe having taken place on the 29th of December. In her will, that of a substantial lady farmer of the period, there is no direct mention of the Shakespeares."

For the years 1581–1584, nothing of importance concerning John Shakespeare appears in the town records except the fact of his absence from all the meetings of the town council at which the attendances are registered. In 1585 he continues to absent himself from the meetings, and during that year three suits against him for debt are recorded. In 1586 there were further suits of the same kind; but he served on juries in May and July, and in the latter month he went to Coventry to become bail with Thomas Jones for the due appearance of Michael Pryce, who was indicted for felony. In the record at that time he is called "Johannes Shakespere, . . . glover."

On the 6th of September, 1586, there was an

“election of newe aldermen,” and “at thys halle William Smythe and Richard Courte are chosen to be aldermen in the places of John Wheler and John Shaxspere, for that Mr. Wheler dothe desyre to be put owt of the companye, and Mr. Shaxspere dothe not come to the halles when they be warned, nor hath not done of longe tyme.”

In the early part of the next year (1587) John Shakespeare was tormented by an action that had been brought against him in the Court of Record by Nicholas Lane, who averred that, in a conference they had held in the previous June, John had made himself responsible for £10 in the event, subsequently realized, of his brother Henry's not paying that sum on Michaelmas Day, 1586, being part of a debt of £22 that was owing to Lane. Judgment was no doubt given in favour of the plaintiff, the suit having been removed by *certiorari* at the instance of the defendant. The legal papers are in Latin, and John's name appears in them as Shakspere, Shaksper, Shacksper, Shaxpere, Schackspere, and Shakesper.

In 1588 and 1589 his name appears in connection with certain suits, sometimes as plaintiff. In the autumn of 1589 he brought an action against Lambert concerning an arrangement that had been made for the surrender of Asbies, and from his bill of complaints we learn that he was still engaged in commercial speculations; but the litigation seems to have been abandoned. In 1591 he was defend-



ant in several suits; and on the 16th of December he served on a jury in the Court of Record.

In 1592 he was appraiser of the estates of two deceased persons. In that year Lucy and other commissioners prepared lists of the recusants of Warwickshire. Among those found who had been "hearetofore presented," at Stratford-on-Avon, "for not comminge monethlie to the Church according to hir Majesties lawes," were "Mr. John Shackspere" and eight others; but the record states: "It is sayd that these laste nine coom not to Church for feare of processe for debttee." In the paper from which the commissioners obtained their information the words are: "Wee suspect these nyne persons next ensuinge absent themselves for feare of processes." They are named, "Mr. John Shackspeare" among them. Then they were not recusants — persons who refused to conform to the established rites of the Church — but debtors.

Mrs. Stopes thinks "it is quite possible" that this reference is to John Shakespeare, the shoemaker, who has sometimes been confounded with John, the glover, but who is not called "Mr." elsewhere in the town records. But as the shoemaker had been Master of the Shoemakers' Company, he "*might* have been called 'Mr.'" in this instance. Halliwell-Phillipps and others have no doubt that our friend of Henley Street is the person.

In 1593 there were two suits against "Johannem Shaxpere;" and in 1595 another against "Philip-

pum Grene, chaundeler, Henricum Rogers, butcher, et Johannem Shaxpere." With respect to this last suit Halliwell-Phillipps remarks: "The somewhat peculiar form of this entry, John Shakespeare being the only one of three defendants whose name is given without the addition of a trade, seems to be an indication that he was at that time out of business; and that he did not indulge, during the remainder of his life, in his former love for speculation may perhaps be gathered from the circumstance of the present being his last appearance in the register of the Court of Record. It is impossible to ascertain the exact history of the suit, none of the pleas or declarations having been preserved, but there being no notice of him in the entries of the proceedings after its commencement on 19 March, Quiney and Barber [the plaintiffs] continuing the litigation against the other two parties only, it is clear that he was released in some way or other from further liability in the matter."

By this time, as we shall see further on, the poet was doing so well in London that he could help his father in supporting his family and in extricating himself from his pecuniary embarrassments.

What were the causes that led to the continued decline of John Shakespeare's prosperity we do not know; but it was probably due to the general depression in business that seems to have affected Stratford at that time. It had become so serious by 1590 that the bailiffs and burgesses addressed a

petition to the Lord Treasurer Burghley in which they state that the town had fallen "into much decay for want of such trade as heretofore they had by clothing and making of yarn, employing and maintaining a number of poor people by the same, which now live in great penury and misery, by reason they are not set to work as before they have been." Special mention is also made of the decline in the wool trade, which was naturally affected by this depression in the manufacture of clothing and yarn and in which John Shakespeare, as we know, was largely interested.

Professor Baynes, who does not appear to be aware of these facts, believes that John's bad luck in business was due to a "defect of character," a lack of "adequate care and foresight" in his dealings and calculating. He seems, in the opinion of this critic, "to have possessed the eager sanguine temperament which, absorbed in the immediate object of pursuit, overlooks difficulties and neglects the wider considerations on which lasting success depends. Even in his early years at Stratford there are signs of this ardent, impatient, somewhat unheeded temper. He is not only active and pushing, but too restless and excitable to pay proper attention to necessary details, or discharge with punctuality the minor duties of his position. . . . In the years 1556-57 he allowed himself to be sued in the bailiff's court for comparatively small debts. This could not have arisen from any want of means,

as during the same period, in October, 1556, he made the purchase already referred to of two houses with extensive gardens. The actions for debt must therefore have been the result of negligence or temper on John Shakespeare's part, and either alternative tells almost equally against his habits of business coolness and regularity. Another illustration of his restless, ill-considered, and unbalanced energy may be found in the number and variety of occupations which he seems to have added to his early trade of glover and leather-dealer. As his prospects improved he appears to have seized on fresh branches of business, until he had included within his grasp the whole circle of agricultural products that could in any way be brought to market. It would seem also that he added farming, to a not inconsiderable extent, to his expanding retail business in Stratford. But it is equally clear that he lacked the orderly method, the comprehensive outlook, and the vigilant care for details essential for holding well in hand the threads of so complicated a commercial web."

That John was ambitious cannot be doubted, and this may have led him to undertake a larger business on his limited capital than was prudent, in view of the possibility of such a period of depression in trade as actually occurred a few years later. But we have no reason to suppose that he undertook so great a "number and variety of occupations" as Professor Baynes assumes, covering "the whole circle

of agricultural products" and including "farming to a not inconsiderable extent." He simply added to his trade as a glover the dealing in leather and other articles made of leather, and the sale of wool and perhaps other products brought to market by the neighbouring farmers. There is not a shadow of evidence that he himself engaged in farming after he came to Stratford. Had he been the unbalanced and careless man of business described in the passage quoted above, he could never have been successful and prosperous, as he was for more than twenty years. In 1556, before his marriage, he had already made money enough in trade to enable him to buy two houses, and in 1575 he could afford to increase his investments in real estate.

During all his troubles, from 1578 onward, he was not compelled to part with the Henley Street property or to mortgage any portion of it. In 1597, to oblige his neighbour, John Badger, he sold a narrow strip of land (a foot and a half wide) on the western side of that estate, receiving £2, 10s. in payment. He also sold a piece, 17 feet square, in the garden, behind the wool-shop, to oblige Edward Willis, his neighbour on the other side.

## CHAPTER VII.

### SHAKESPEARE GOES TO LONDON

THE date of Shakespeare's leaving Stratford for London cannot be definitely fixed. The poaching adventure is supposed to have occurred in the early part of 1585, and if the consequences of that act drove him from Warwickshire it was probably in the autumn of that year. The birth of the twins in January, 1585, and the difficulty he must have had in supporting his increasing family, are also in favour of that date. It was in that year, moreover, that he became of age, which may have induced him to take this serious step in the hope of bettering his circumstances.

If he did not make the move in the latter part of 1585, it was probably in the spring of 1586. The biographers generally agree upon 1585 or 1586 as the year, but a few believe that it was 1587.

The journey was a more serious undertaking than it is now, when a fast train takes us over the route in four hours or so. Four days would have been good average time then. The facilities for travelling in the reign of good Queen Bess were poor

enough. Public coaches did not begin to run — if the speed of any vehicle could be called *running* at that time — until about half a century later. Road-making as an art was unknown. There were, indeed, what professed to be highways between the principal towns, but they were badly constructed and seldom repaired — merely deep-rutted tracks, almost or quite impassable in wet weather. The country was still generally unenclosed, and when the ruts became too deep for endurance, a fresh track was struck out beside the old one. These roads, for the most part, made themselves, rather than were made, and often became like shallow ditches, the middle being lower than the sides.

The bridges, as a rule, were better than the roads. Some of them had been built by pious priests in earlier times, and were substantial structures of stone, but they were narrow and steep, except over shallow streams of considerable breadth, where they were flat, with many arches, and often had houses upon them, like London Bridge. Sir Hugh Clopton's bridge across the Avon at Stratford is a fine specimen of these old bridges, and it still does good service. Foot-bridges were sometimes only a single wooden beam with cross-pieces nailed to it; and these were also used more or less by horsemen. Edgar in *Lear* (iv. 3. 57) tells how the foul fiend made him "proud of heart to ride on a bay trotting-horse over four-inch bridges."

The hostelries or inns at the principal points

along the great thoroughfares were large and fine. Harrison tells us that some of them could accommodate three hundred guests, and were even superior to those in the metropolis. He says: "Of all in England there are no worse inns than in London, and yet many are there far better than the best that I have heard of in any foreign country, if all circumstances be duly considered."

The vehicles were in keeping with the roads. Carriers' carts, long covered wagons, conveyed passengers from place to place; but a writer of the times says that this kind of journeying was so slow and tedious that it was used only by women and people of inferior condition. For the most part men travelled on foot or on horseback, luggage and goods being carried by pack-horses. Coaches are said to have been introduced by Booman, Queen Elizabeth's own coachman; but they were little better than carts without springs, the body of the vehicle resting directly on the axles. In 1568, when the Queen gave an audience to the French ambassador, she described to him "the aching pains she was suffering in consequence of having been knocked about in a coach which had been driven a little too fast a few days before." At that time, as Professor Hales remarks, "the fact was that the roads could not bear the coaches, and the coaches could not bear the roads; so there was but little traffic in that way."

We can get some idea of the condition of the



roads sixty or seventy years later from the fact that eight hundred horses were once taken by Cromwell's forces while sticking in the mud. In 1640 the road from London to Dover was the best in England, owing to the large Continental travel, but it took four days to traverse the sixty-six miles. A trip by wagon or stage-coach from London to Liverpool, about two hundred miles, took ten days in summer and twelve in winter.

The perils from highwaymen were worse than the discomforts from bad roads. It was not safe to travel alone or unarmed. Harrison says that travellers carry staves twelve or thirteen feet long, with a twelve-inch pike at the end; and, since the robbers are often similarly armed, he adds that it is well to carry pistols also, "whereby he may deal with them further off in his own defence before he come within the danger of these weapons." He also tells us that the chamberlains, tapsters, and hostlers of the inns are often in league with the robbers; as we learn also from Shakespeare in 1 *Henry IV.* (ii. 1). Gadshill says to the Chamberlain in the inn at Rochester: "thou variest no more from picking of purses than giving direction doth from labouring; thou layest the plot how;" and the Chamberlain tells Gadshill about the guests in the house who have money and goods, and are soon to start on their journey — the same who are afterwards waylaid by Falstaff and the rest. Harrison adds that these highwaymen are apt to come to

the gallows, or, as he expresses it, "to be trussed up in a Tyburn tippet, which happeneth unto them commonly before they come to middle age."

No wonder that travelling was little in vogue except under the pressure of dire necessity. A rhymist of the day says:—

" A citizen, for recreation sake,  
To see the country would a journey take  
Some dozen miles, or very little more,  
Taking his leave with friends two months before,  
With drinking healths and shaking by the hand,  
As he had travelled to some new-found land."

There were two main routes between Stratford and London: one by Oxford, the other by Banbury and Aylesbury. There is reason to believe that Shakespeare, in his yearly visits to his native town during his residence in London, used both routes, but it is probable that he ordinarily took the Oxford road.

On his first journey to London very likely he went on foot, as most people did who could not afford to have a horse. If they did not expect to return very soon, they often bought a horse, which they sold on reaching their destination. Possibly our young adventurer did this, but, having, as we may suppose, little money to risk in an uncertain investment in horse-flesh, he may have preferred to foot it.

Professor Hales, in an interesting paper on Shake-

Shakespeare's routes to and from London (*Cornhill Magazine*, January, 1877), supposes the journey divided into four daily stages. The first, of twenty miles, was to Chipping Norton, a pleasant ride nowadays over a beautiful undulating country, a considerable portion of which is in Warwickshire. At a point six miles from Stratford, where the road branches, there is now a sign-post with this poetic inscription:—

“Six miles to Shakspeare's town whose name  
Is known throughout the earth;  
To Shipton four, whose lesser fame  
Boasts no such poet's birth.”

Little did the young man dream, as he plodded past this point on the road, that his native place would come to be memorable as “Shakspeare's town,” or that his name and fame would ever be known throughout the earth.

The Shipton of the guide-post was the only town worthy of the name through which he would pass during the day. It is now a quiet place, as it must have been then, though in stage-coach times lively enough as a station for changing horses and staying over night.

Chipping Norton, where Shakespeare would spend the night, was then, as long before, an important market-town, with many inns and a fine old church, which has probably changed very little since the sixteenth century.

The next day Shakespeare would plod on or jog on twenty miles further to Oxford. That was a fair day's journey even on horseback. When Mary Queen of Scots was removed from Bolton Castle to Ripon, on her way south, the ride of sixteen miles took from early morning to late in the evening of a January day; but the roads were doubtless in worse condition in the winter than they would have been at the time of year when Shakespeare is likely to have travelled. The most interesting point on this day's journey would be the ancient town of Woodstock, associated with the memory of Fair Rosamond and of Chaucer. Critical research had not then disparaged the traditions concerning the lady or the poet, and Shakespeare could have had no doubts concerning the connection of either with the locality.

Woodstock had also associations with his own time. The palace had been one of the places where Elizabeth was confined during her sister's reign. It was here that she envied the happy lot of the milkmaid whom she heard singing; and here she wrote on the shutter of her chamber these verses: —

“O Fortune, how thy restless wavering state  
Hath fraught with cares my troubled wit!  
Witness this present prison whither fate  
Could bear me, and the joys I quit.  
Thou caused'st the guilty to be loosed  
From bands wherein are innocents enclosed;

Causing me guiltless to be straight reserved,  
 And freeing those that death had well deserved.  
 But by her envy can be nothing wrought ;  
 So God send to my foes all they have sought !

ELIZABETH, *Prisoner.*

A. D. 1555."

These verses were written only about thirty years before Shakespeare passed through Woodstock, and he may have perused them if he visited the old palace, which was seldom occupied as a royal residence then or during the reign of the Stuarts.

At Oxford, according to tradition, Shakespeare, on his journeys to and from London, used to lodge at the Crown Inn, kept by John Davenant, father of Sir William Davenant, who was a godson of the poet. It was asserted later that Sir William was more than a poetical son of Shakespeare, and Sir William himself was inclined to favour the story ; but Halliwell-Phillipps, after elaborate investigation, decided that there was no ground for the imputation that the comely wife of John Davenant was unfaithful to her liege lord.

In this first visit to Oxford, however, it is improbable that Shakespeare put up at the Crown, which was then the best hostelrie in the city. Some humbler inn was doubtless his resting-place after the day's journey.

The next day he probably went on twenty-five miles further to High Wycombe, this being the common route from Oxford on the way to London ; and

another stretch of twenty-nine miles on the fourth day would bring him to the metropolis. The roads would be somewhat better in the vicinity of the great city, and he could therefore make more rapid progress than on the first two days. On these latter stages of the journey he would pass through no large towns or scenes of special historical or other interest, though we cannot imagine the ride or walk to have been dull or monotonous to a young man with the keen eyes and alert intelligence of Shakespeare.

To the English people of that day London seemed one of the wonders of the world; as indeed it was, though surpassed in some respects by Paris and by Venice, then in the height of its power and splendour. Drayton, in the *Poly-Olbion*, says of it:—

“O more than mortal man that did this town begin,  
Whose knowledge found the plot so fit to set it in,  
As in the fittest place by man that could be thought,  
To which by sea or land provisions could be brought!  
And such a road for ships scarce all the world commands  
As is the goodly Thames, near where Brute’s city stands.”

It is hardly necessary to state that the “Brute” here is no Roman famous in history, but “Brutus of Troy,” who, according to the mythical annals of Britain, as recorded in the old romances and chronicles, was the grandson of Æneas, and the founder of New Troy, or London. He is mentioned, as the reader may remember, in Milton’s *Comus*, in connec-

tion with the story of Sabrina, which is a part of the same legendary history.

London was still surrounded by its ancient walls, though portions of these were somewhat dilapidated. The gates were conspicuous structures, and were still guarded and closed at night, as they continued to be until 1760. The population, then about three hundred thousand, was mainly within the walls, though beginning to spread beyond them, especially in the neighbourhood of some of the gates. The city was crowded with houses, but open spaces existed here and there, and many large gardens. The Temple Gardens, where Plantagenet plucked the white rose and Somerset the red (1 *Henry VI.* ii. 4), still remain, though somewhat contracted in area and more built upon than at that time. The Strand, the road from Temple Bar to Westminster, which was then an independent city, had only a few houses on the northern side, but on the south was adorned with noble mansions, with lawns and gardens extending to the river. John Gerard, whose *Herball* was published in 1597, and who had a large garden (probably attached to his house in Holborn) to which he often refers in his book, afterwards had another of two acres leased to him by Queen Anne, the consort of James I. This garden adjoined her mansion, Somerset House, also called "Strond House," which was on the bank of the river.

Apropos of gardens, there was one of forty acres attached to Ely House in Holborn, the palace of the

Bishop of Ely. In *Richard III.* (iii. 4. 38), just before ordering the execution of Hastings, Richard says to the Bishop: —

“ When I was last in Holborn,  
I saw good strawberries in your garden there.  
I do beseech you send for some of them ” —

which the Bishop does; and no doubt Richard enjoyed them heartily at his dinner, which he swears that he will not eat until he sees the decapitated head of Hastings. The suburb of Holborn was then chiefly occupied by gardens. In other directions outside the walls were many fine mansions with extensive gardens and pleasure-grounds, together with scattered hamlets, fields, and forests.

Crossing the Thames by London Bridge, then the only one over the river, we come to the village of Southwark, with the grand old church of St. Saviour's, the palace, the prison, the theatres, and the Tabard Inn, whence Chaucer's pilgrims started on their journey to Canterbury. Here Shakespeare lived for years; and here was the Falcon Tavern, the haunt of wits and players and poets. Here, too, was Paris Garden, with its bears, among them the famous Sackerson which Slender told Anne Page (*Merry Wives*, i. 1. 307) he had seen loose and had taken him by the chain! And here was the Globe Theatre, forever renowned among the playhouses of the Bankside as the one particularly associated with



Shakespeare, though not built until some years after he first came to London.

But space would fail for referring to the many localities in and about the metropolis that were connected with Shakespeare or are mentioned by him in the plays:— to Eastcheap, where Falstaff and Prince Hal haunted the Boar's Head; to the cathedral of Old St. Paul's, the nave of which had become the resort of idlers and a place of merchandise, where Falstaff says he bought (hired) Bardolph; to Bucklersbury, a street on the right of Cheapside, where druggists abounded, fragrant with medicinal herbs, to which fat Jack alludes when he speaks of the dudes of the day smelling "like Bucklersbury in simple time" (herb-gathering time); to Picket-hatch and Turnbull Street, of less fragrant memory, the resorts of disreputable women; and to many buildings and localities of historical importance, churches, palaces, prisons, etc., very few of which have survived the lapse of centuries. The Middle Temple Hall still stands, unchanged in its interior since Elizabeth danced there and *Twelfth Night* was acted beneath its timbered roof; and Gray's Inn, where the *Comedy of Errors* was performed — the only two buildings in London, where plays of Shakespeare were thus acted in his lifetime. Crosby Hall, the residence of Richard III. when he was Duke of Gloster, and later of Sir Thomas More, as also of "Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother," likewise remains in Bishopgate Street, now a noted restaurant

of that eastern district, where one may lunch or dine in the grand hall in which Richard feasted of old. Hard by is the church of Great St. Helen's, a remnant of the ancient priory of the saint, old in Shakespeare's day and doubtless familiar to him, as in 1598 he was assessed for property in the parish, and may have resided there for a time, though we have no other evidence that he did. However that may be, it is probable that to his mention of Crosby Hall in *Richard III.* we owe the preservation of the fine remains of that mansion, which, after being occupied as a Presbyterian chapel, and later as a warehouse, was restored in 1834 in its present form, and we may hope will long remain as one of the most beautiful and interesting relics of Shakespeare's London.

To the few other relics of that period, better known from their historical fame and interest, like the Tower and Westminster Abbey, it is not necessary to refer here. Though mentioned in the plays and of course familiar to Shakespeare, they have no special connection with his personal history.

What friends or what employment Shakespeare found on coming to London we do not know. Doubtless there were Stratford people in the city known to his father or to himself whom he could look up, and who might be of some assistance to him until he could get work of some kind; but we have definite information of only one such person.

This was Richard Field, who was apprenticed to a printer in London in 1579, and soon after attaining his freedom in 1587 began business on his own account, an elegant edition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1589) being one of the many books from his press. That the Shakespeares were friends of the Fields is evident from the fact that John Shakespeare was appraiser of the goods of Henry Field, the father of Richard and a tanner by trade, whose inventory, attached to his will, was made out in August, 1592. The next year (1593) Richard Field printed Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*.

Mr. William Blades (*Shakespeare and Typography*, 1872) advances the theory, based on the intimate knowledge of the printer's art shown in the poet's works, that he must have had a practical acquaintance with the business; and that he probably worked at the trade for three years after he arrived in London, before becoming an actor. The theory is argued with much ingenuity in Blades's book, but has made few, if any, converts among the biographers and commentators. Shakespeare was keenly interested in all forms of human activity, and in his visits to Field's printing-house would soon pick up all the knowledge of the trade which appears in his works. Besides, it is quite certain that he personally superintended the printing of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, both of which were published before most of his allusions to typography were written.

According to a tradition which does not appear in manuscript or in print until about the middle of the 18th century, though said to have been originally related by Sir William Davenant a century earlier, Shakespeare's first employment in London was in holding horses at the door of the theatre. The earliest record of the story that has been discovered is a manuscript note preserved in the University Library, Edinburgh, written about the year 1748, which reads thus: "Sir William Davenant, who has been call'd a natural son of our author, us'd to tell the following whimsical story of him: — Shakespeare, when he first came from the country to the play-house, was not admitted to act; but as it was then the custom for all the people of fashion to come on horseback to entertainments of all kinds, it was Shakespeare's employment for a time, with several other poor boys belonging to the company, to hold the horses and take care of them during the representation; — by his dexterity and care he soon got a great deal of business in this way, and was personally known to most of the quality that frequented the house, insomuch that, being obliged, before he was taken into a higher and more honourable employment within doors, to train up boys to assist him, it became long afterwards a usual way among them to recommend themselves by saying that they were Shakespeare's boys."

In 1753, the story is printed in the *Lives of the Poets* (edited by Colley Cibber) as follows: "I can-

not forbear relating a story which Sir William Davenant told Mr. Betterton, who communicated it to Mr. Rowe; Rowe told it Mr. Pope, and Mr. Pope told it to Dr. Newton, the late editor of Milton, and from a gentleman who heard it from him 'tis here related. Concerning Shakespear's first appearance in the playhouse:— When he came to London, he was without money and friends, and being a stranger he knew not to whom to apply, nor by what means to support himself. At that time, coaches not being in use, and as gentlemen were accustomed to ride to the playhouse, Shakespear, driven to the last necessity, went to the playhouse door, and pick'd up a little money by taking care of the gentlemen's horses who came to the play. He became eminent even in that profession, and was taken notice of for his diligence and skill in it; he had soon more business than he himself could manage, and at last hired boys under him, who were known by the name of Shakespear's boys. Some of the players, accidentally conversing with him, found him so acute and master of so fine a conversation that, struck therewith, they recommended him to the house, in which he was first admitted in a very low station, but he did not long remain so, for he soon distinguished himself, if not as an extraordinary actor, at least as a fine writer."

Johnson, in 1765, repeated the story in substantially the same form as that of 1748; and Jordan, in a manuscript written about 1783, and others

subsequently gave it with sundry variations and embellishments.

Some biographers discredit the tradition entirely, but Halliwell-Phillipps, Sidney Lee, and others see no inherent improbability in it. Knight says it is possible that Shakespeare employed boys for the business, but never held the horses himself. Karl Elze declares that "the story *cannot* be true." It is incredible, he says, that "a married man and father of three children, who had enjoyed a comparatively good education, — and who, besides, bore within his breast the divine spark of poetic genius, and the ambitious feelings that must assuredly have accompanied it, — could have so thrown himself away, unless in the most abject want, and driven to it by hunger. Now to all appearance Shakespeare was in no way in any such straitened circumstances. He possessed accomplishments enough to have earned a living in some more refined, or, at least, in some more remunerative way, and to have found some employment in the theatre itself. If he did not begin at the outset by taking some subordinate parts on the stage, he might have obtained employment by copying out the actors' parts, or in some other of the many occupations to be had in connection with a theatre."

On the other hand, the fact that the tradition is founded upon the practice of gentlemen to go to the theatre on horseback, "a custom obsolete after the Restoration, is sufficient to establish the antiquity

of the story." Sir John Davies, in his *Epigrams* (1599), ridicules a man of inferior position for being constantly on horseback, imitating in that respect persons of higher rank, who ride even "into the fieldes playes to behold." Halliwell-Phillipps, who cites this allusion, adds: "There is at all events no valid reason for enrolling the tradition amongst the absolute fictions that have been circulated respecting the poet. Several writers have taken that course mainly on the ground that, although it was known to Rowe, he does not allude to it in his *Life of Shakespeare*, 1709; but there is no improbability in the supposition that the story was not related to him until after the publication of that work, the second edition of which in 1714 is a mere reprint of the first. Other reasons for the omission may be suggested, but even if it be conceded that the anecdote was rejected as suspicious and improbable, that circumstance alone cannot be decisive against the opinion that there may be glimmerings of truth in it. This is, indeed, all that is contended for. Few would be disposed to accept the story literally as related by Johnson, but when it is considered that the tradition must be a very early one, that its genealogy is respectable, and that it harmonizes with the general old belief of the great poet's having, when first in London, subsisted by 'very mean employments,' little doubt can fairly be entertained that it has at least in some way or other a foundation in real occurrences. It should also

be remembered that horse-stealing was one of the very commonest offences of the period, and one which was probably stimulated by the facility with which delinquents of that class obtained pardons. The safe custody of a horse was a matter of serious import, and a person who had satisfactorily fulfilled such a trust would not be lightly estimated."

It is significant, moreover, that all the early traditions that are at all credible "concur in the belief that Shakespeare did not leave his native town with histrionic intention." Aside from this, it would be a mistake "to assume that his dramatic tastes impelled him to undertake an arduous and premeditated journey to encounter the risk of an engagement at a metropolitan theatre, however powerfully they may have influenced his choice of a profession after he had once arrived in London. For, residing throughout his youth in what may fairly be considered a theatrical neighbourhood, with continual facilities for the cultivation of those tastes, if he had yielded in his boyish days to an impulsive fascination for the stage, it is most likely that he would in some way have joined the profession while its doors were readily accessible through one of the numerous itinerant companies, and before, not after, such inclinations must have been in some measure restrained by the local domestic ties that resulted from his marriage. If he had quitted Stratford-on-Avon in his early youth, there



would be no difficulty in understanding that he became one of the elder players' boys or apprentices, but it is extremely unlikely that, at the age of twenty-one, he would have voluntarily left a wife and three children in Warwickshire for the sake of obtaining a miserable position on the London boards."

It is not necessary, therefore, to assume that Shakespeare went first to the theatre in search of employment therein. A more plausible explanation of the horse-holding tradition is suggested by Halliwell-Phillipps. It appears that James Burbage, the owner of the Theatre, rented premises near Smithfield in which he "usually kept horses at liverye for sundry persons," the manager of the stable being "a northerne man usually called by the name of Robyn." If Shakespeare had bought a horse for the journey to London, he would probably take the animal to Smithfield in order to sell it. He might there have fallen in with Burbage, and have been hired by him to do some work in the stable and also to take care, during the play, of the horses of Burbage's customers who visited the theatre. Sooner or later the promising young man got into the theatre in some humble capacity, as tradition represents. William Castle, the parish-clerk at Stratford, in 1693 (see page 15 above) said that, after Shakespeare ran away to London he "was received into the play-house as a serviture" (servitor); and Rowe similarly says that "he was received into the company

then in being at first in a very mean rank." Malone, in 1780, refers to "a stage tradition that his first office in the theatre was that of prompter's attendant, whose employment it is to give the performers notice to be ready to enter as often as the business of the play requires their appearance on the stage;" and Downes, in 1710, remarks: "I have known men within my remembrance arrive to the highest dignities of the theatre, who made their entrance in the quality of mutes, joint-stools, flower-pots, and tapestry-hangings."

When Shakespeare came to London there were only two playhouses in the metropolis — the Theatre and the Curtain — and these were on the north side of the Thames, both situated in the parish of Shore-ditch, in the fields of the Liberty of Halliwell. This was a sparsely populated suburb, about half a mile outside the city walls, "possessing outwardly the appearance of a country village, but inwardly sustaining much of the bustle and all the vices of the town." The rural character of the locality is indicated by the fact that here Gerard, a few years afterwards, discovered a new kind of crow-foot which he describes as being similar to the ordinary plant, "saving that his leaves are fatter, thicker, and greener, and his small twiggie stalkes stand upright, otherwise it is like; of which kinde it chanced that, walking in the fieldes next unto the Theater by London, in company of a worshipfull marchant named master Nicholas Lete, I founde

one of this kinde there with double flowers, which before that time I had not seene."

Some writers seem to suppose that in London the poet's surroundings were in all respects essentially urban and in marked contrast to those he had left behind in his native town; but, as we have seen, there were many large gardens in the very heart of the city, and here, in the immediate neighbourhood of the playhouse in which he soon found employment, were green fields where he could pluck wild flowers as he used to do in the pleasant meadows on the banks of the Avon.

The Theatre was built and owned by James Burbage, who in 1576 obtained from one Giles Allen a lease for twenty-one years of houses and land situated between Finsbury Field and the public road from Bishopgate to Shoreditch Church. Burbage, though a carpenter by trade, had later become an actor, and was a leading member of the Earl of Leicester's company of players. He was the originator of theatrical buildings in England, for the successful promotion of which both his earlier and his adopted profession were exactly suited. He obtained the lease with this express object, with a proviso from Allen that, if he expended two hundred pounds upon the buildings already on the estate, he should be at liberty "to take downe and carrie awaie to his and their owne proper use all such buildinges and other thinges as should be builded, erected or sett upp, in or uppon the gardeines and voide

grounde by the said indentures graunted, or anie parte therof, by the said Jeames, his executors or assignes, either for a theatre or playinge place, or for anie other lawefull use, for his or their commodities." The lease was signed on April 13th, 1576, and Burbage must have commenced the erection of his theatre immediately afterwards. It was the earliest fabric of the kind ever built in the country, and by the summer of the following year it was a recognized centre of theatrical amusements. On the first of August, 1577, the Lords of the Privy Council directed a letter to be forwarded "to the L. Wentworth, Mr. of the Rolles, and Mr. Lieutenaunt of the Tower, signifieng unto them that, for thavoiding of the sicknes likelie to happen through the heate of the weather and assemblies of the people of London to playes, her Highnes plesure is that, as the L. Mayor hath taken order within the Citee, so they, imediatlie upon the receipt of their ll. lettres, shall take order with such as are and do use to play without the liberties of the Citee within that countie, as the Theater and such like, shall forbear any more to play untill Mighelmas be past at the least, as they will aunswer to the contrarye." This is the earliest notice of the Theatre yet discovered.

The Curtain must have been built soon after the Theatre and was very near it. A reference to it by name occurs in Northbrooke's *Treatise on Dicing*, licensed for publication in December, 1576. Both

buildings were of wood, as proved by documents of the time referring to them, and were round in form, like the Globe theatre, erected later, of which pictures are extant. Some writers believe that *Henry V.* was performed at the Curtain in 1599, and that the description of the theatre in the prologue of the first act as a "wooden O" refers to this playhouse; but it is more probable that the Globe is meant, to which Burbage's company removed in the spring of 1599.

It would be natural to suppose that the name of the Curtain was of theatrical origin, but it was actually derived from the piece of ground on which the playhouse stood, and which from its shape was called the Curtain, being mentioned by that title in a lease as early as 1538. A mansion built upon this land was known as Curtain House, and Curtain Garden and Curtain Close are mentioned in documents of the time. The name is still retained in Curtain Road, which must have been so called either from the theatre or the land.

Although entertainments took place both at the Theatre and at the Curtain during the winter months, there can be but little doubt that the roof in each of these buildings merely covered the stage and galleries, the pit or yard being open to the sky. This was certainly the case in the latter theatre. The author of *Vox Graculi or Jack Dawes Prognostication*, 1623, describing the characteristics of the month of April, observes: "About this time new

playes will be in more request then old, and if company come currant to the Bull and Curtaine, there will be more money gathered in one after-noonne then will be giveu to Kingsland Spittle [Hospital] in a whole moneth; also, if, at this time, about the houres of foure and five it waxe cloudy, and then raine downeright, they shall sit dryer in the galleries then those who are the understanding men in the yard." The afternoon was likewise the usual time for the performances in Shakespeare's day. Chettle, in his *Kind Hartes Dreame*, 1592, alludes to bowling-alleys, situated between the City walls and the Theatre, "that were wont in the after-noonnes to be left empty, by the recourse of good fellows unto that unprofitable recreation of stage-playing."

The charge for admission to the Theatre was a penny, but this merely entitled the visitor to standing-room in the lower part of the house. If he wanted to enter any of the galleries another penny was demanded, and even then a good seat was not always secured without a repetition of the fee. None who go, observes Lambard (*Perambulation of Kent*, ed. 1596), "to Paris Gardein, the Bell Savage or Theatre, to beholde beare baiting, enterludes or fence play, can account of any pleasant spectacle unlesse they first pay one pennie at the gate, another at the entrie of the scaffold, and the thirde for a quiet standing." The author of *Pappe with an Hatchet*, 1589, speaks of twopence as the usual price of admission "at the Theater," so the prob-

ability is that the penny was for places which would be endured by only the lowest and poorest class of auditors, the "groundlings," as Hamlet calls them (iii. 2. 12), who stood in the yard or pit, exposed to the uncertainties of the weather. Those who were in the galleries were more or less protected from the rain. There were upper as well as lower galleries in the building, the former being mentioned in the proposed lease to Burbage of 1585: "and further that yt shall or maye be lawfull for the sayde Gyles and for hys wyfe and familie, upon lawfull request therefore made to the sayde Jeames Burbage, his executors or assignes, to enter or come into the premisses, and their in some one of the upper romes to have such convenient place to sett or stande to se such playes as shal be ther played, freely without anythinge therefore payeing, soe that the sayde Gyles, hys wyfe and familie, doe come and take ther places before they shal be taken upp by any others." It appears from this extract that there were seats for the audience, as well as standing-room, in the galleries.

Neither the Theatre nor the Curtain was used exclusively for dramatic entertainments. Both were frequently engaged for matches and exercises in fencing, as appears from several notices, dated between the years 1578 and 1585, in a curious manuscript volume which seems to be a register of a society for the advancement of fencing. It would appear from the original manuscript of Stow's

*Survey* that not only fencers, but tumblers and such like, sometimes exhibited at these theatres. Near the buildings of the dissolved priory, observes Stow, "are builded two howses for the shoue of activities, comodies, tragidies and histories for recreation; the one of them is named the Curteyn in Halywell, the other the Theatre; thes are on the backesyde of Holywell, towards the filde."

The district where these theatres were erected had long been a great suburban playground. At the butts in Finsbury Fields the youth and manhood of the city practised archery every Sunday, feast-day, and holiday, as enjoined by royal proclamation and city ordinance. Here the games and sports of the people were enjoyed, as hand-ball, bandy-ball, football, cock-fighting, and the like. This was also the drill-ground of the train-bands of the city; and here the periodical musters and inspections of the militia were held.

The Theatre appears to have been a favourite place of amusement, especially with the more unruly of the populace. There are several allusions to its crowded audiences and to the license which occasionally attended the entertainments, the disorder sometimes penetrating into the City itself. "By reason no playes were the same daye, all the Citie was quiet," observes the writer of a letter in June, 1584. Stockwood, in a *Sermon Preached at Paules Crosse* in August, 1578, indignantly asks: "Wyll not a fylthye playe wyth the blast of a trumpette



sooner call thyther a thousande than an houres tolling of a bell bring to the sermon a hundred? — nay, even heere in the Citie, without it be at this place and some other certaine ordinarie audience, where shall you finde a reasonable company? — whereas, if you resorte to the Theatre, the Curtayne and other places of playes in the Citie, you shall on the Lords Day have these places, with many other that I cannot reckon, so full as possible they can throng.” Upon a Sunday, two years afterwards, in April, 1580, there was a great disturbance in the same quarter, thus noticed in a letter from the Lord Mayor to the Privy Council dated April 12th: — “When it happened on Sundaie last that some great disorder was committed at the Theatre, I sent for the undershireve of Middlesex to understand the circumstances, to the intent that by myself or by him I might have caused such redresse to be had as in dutie and discretion I might, and therefore did also send for the plaiers to have apered afore me, and the rather because those playes doe make assembles of cittizens and there families of whome I have charge; but forasmuch as I understand that your Lordship, with other of hir Majesties most honorable Counsell, have entered into examination of that matter, I have surceassed to procede further, and do humbly refer the whole to your wisdomes and grave considerations; howbeit, I have further thought it my dutie to informe your Lordship, and therewith also to beseche to have in your honorable

rememberance, that the players of playes which are used at the Theatre and other such places, and tumblers and such like, are a very superfluous sort of men and of suche facultie as the lawes have disallowed, and their exercise of those playes is a great hinderance of the service of God, who hath with His mighty hand so lately admonished us of oure earnest repentance." The Lord Mayor of course alludes to the great earthquake which had occurred a few days previously. In June, 1584, there was a disturbance just outside the Theatre, thus narrated in a letter to Lord Burghley: "Uppon Weddensdaye one Browne, a serving man in a blew coat, a shifting fellowe, havinge a perrelous witt of his owne, entending a sport if he cold have browght it to passe, did at Theater doore querell with certen poore boyes, handicraft prentises, and strooke somme of theym; and lastlie he, with his sword, wondeid and maymed one of the boyes upon the left hand, whereupon there assembled nere a thousand people; — this Browne dyd very cuninglie convey hymself awaye." The crowds of disorderly people frequenting the Theatre are thus alluded to in Tarlton's *Newes out of Purgatorie*, 1590: "Upon Whitsoi monday last I would needs to the Theatre to see a play, where, when I came, I founde such concourse of unrulye people that I thought it better solitary to walk in the fields then to intermeddle myselfe amongst such a great presse." In 1592, from an apprehension that the London apprentices might

indulge in riots on Midsummer-night, the following order was issued by the Lords of the Council: "Moreover for avoydinge of thes unlawfull assemblies in those quarters, yt is thoughte meete yow shall take order that there be noe playes used in anye place nere thereaboutes, as the Theator, Cur-tayne or other usuall places there where the same are comonly used, nor no other sorte of unlawfull or forbidden pastymes that drawe together the baser sorte of people, from henceforth untill the feast of St. Michaell."

The crowds which flocked to places of entertainment were reasonably supposed to increase the danger of the spread of infection during an epidemic, and the Theatre and Curtain were sometimes ordered to be closed on that account. The Lord Mayor of London in a letter to Sir Francis Walsingham, dated May 3rd, 1583, thus writes in reference to the plague: "Among other we finde one very great and dangerous inconvenience, the assemblie of people to playes, beare-bayting, fencers and prophane spectacles at the Theatre and Curtaine and other like places, to which doe resorte great multitudes of the basist sort of people and many enfected with sores runing on them, being out of our jurisdiction, and some whome we cannot descerne by any dilligence and which be otherwise perilous for contagion, beside the withdrawing from Gods service, the peril of ruines of so weake byldinges, and the avancement of incontinecie and most ungodly confeder-

acies." In the spring of 1586 plays at the Theatre were prohibited for the first of these reasons, as appears from the following note in the Privy Council Register under the date of May 11th: "A lettre to the L. Maior; his l. is desired, according to his request made to their Lordshippes by his lettres of the vij.th of this present, to geve order for the restrayning of playes and interludes within and about the Cittie of London, for th'avoyding of infection feared to grow and increase this tyme of sommer by the comon assemblies of people at those places, and that their Lordshippes have taken the like order for the prohibiting of the use of playes at the Theater and th'other places about Newington out of his charge."

Of Shakespeare's history after he obtained admission to the theatre in some capacity we know nothing. If he was employed at first as a servant or prompter's boy, as tradition says, we cannot doubt that his abilities were soon recognized and led to something higher. Probably it was not long before he began his career as an actor in small parts and worked his way up more or less rapidly. But for seven years after he went to London, or from 1585 to 1592, we have no information whatever concerning him, and tradition is silent except with reference to the very beginning of the period.

Aside from his work, whatever it may have been, in the theatre, we may assume, with Halliwell-Phillipps, that this was the chief period of his liter-

ary training. "Removed prematurely from school, residing with illiterate relatives in a bookless neighbourhood, thrown into the midst of occupations adverse to scholastic progress, it is difficult to believe that when he first left Stratford he was not all but destitute of polished accomplishments. He could not, at all events, under the circumstances in which he had then so long been placed, have had the opportunity of acquiring a refined style of composition. After he had once, however, gained a footing in London, he would have been placed under different conditions. Books of many kinds would have been accessible to him, and he would have been almost daily within hearing of the best dramatic poetry of the age. There would also no doubt have been occasional facilities for picking up a little smattering of the Continental languages, and it is almost beyond a doubt that he added somewhat to his classical knowledge during his residence in the metropolis. It is, for instance, hardly possible that the *Amores* of Ovid, whence he derived his earliest motto [for *Venus and Adonis*], could have been one of his school-books."

In 1587 several companies of actors visited Stratford, two of which were those under the patronage of the Queen and of Lord Leicester. Sidney Lee plausibly suggests that "Shakespeare's friends may have called the attention of the strolling players to the homeless lad, rumours of whose search for employment about the London theatres may have

reached Stratford ;” and “from such incidents may have sprung the opportunity which offered Shakespeare fame and fortune.” If at the time of the return of these players to London he had already got into the theatre in some inferior capacity, they may have contributed to his promotion. With or without such help, however, William Shakespeare when once in the theatre was where his talents could not fail to be speedily recognized, and where his progress in the work for which he was born and fitted was assured.

The company to which Shakespeare seems to have belonged was first known as the Earl of Leicester’s, being under the nominal patronage of that nobleman. Later, as it passed from one patron to another, on account of the death of his predecessor or for some other reason, it became successively the Earl of Derby’s, the Lord Chamberlain’s, and, after the accession of James to the throne, the King’s Servants, or Players. The patronage of a peer of the realm or “some higher personage” was required by an act of Parliament in 1571, as a condition of the license granted to players. The patron’s function was practically confined to this duty of granting or renewing the licenses.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### HIS DRAMATIC APPRENTICESHIP

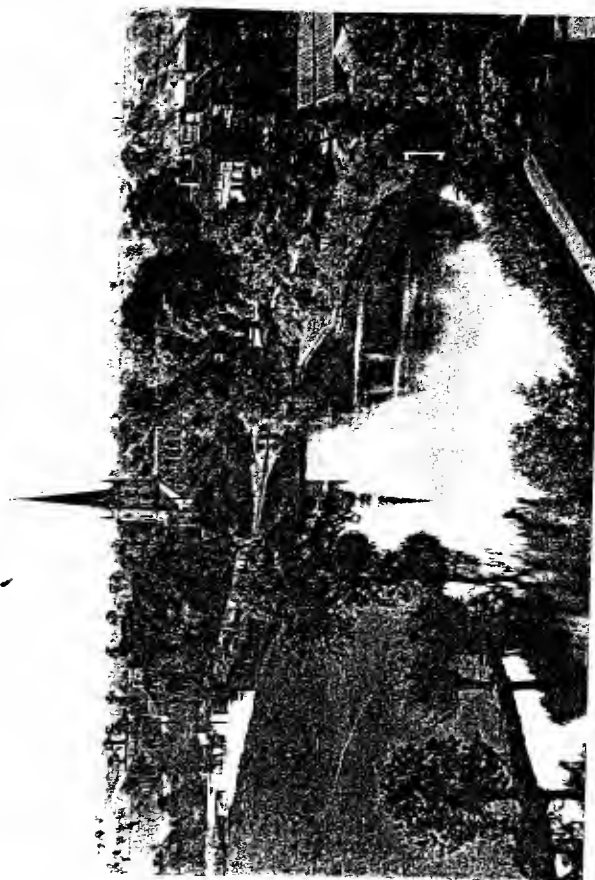
At last, in 1592, we get a definite reference to Shakespeare in the literature of the time; and, curiously enough, we are indebted for it to the envy and spite of a disappointed and dying playwright, Robert Greene; who in the autumn of that year published a little book, the full title of which (in the edition of 1596, the earliest that has come down to us) is as follows: "*Greens Goats-worth of Wit, bought with a Million of Repentaunce.* Describing the follie of youth, the falsehoode of make-shift flatterers, the miserie of the negligent, and mischiefes of deceiving Courtesans. Written before his death and published at his dying request. *Fælicem fuisse infaustum.*" The dedication is "To those Gentlemen, his quondam acquaintance, that spend their wits in making Plaies, R. G. wisheth a better exercise, and wisdome to prevent his extremities."

The passage in which the reference to Shakespeare occurs reads thus:—

"If wofull experience may moove you, gentlemen, to beware, or unheard of wretchednes intreate you to

take heed, I doubt not but you will looke backe with sorrow on your time past, and endeavour with repentance to spend that which is to come. Wonder not, for with thee wil I first begin, thou famous gracer of tragedians, that Greene, who hath said with thee, like the foole in his heart, there is no God, should now give glorie unto His greatnesse; for penetrating is His power, His hand lies heavie upon me, He hath spoken unto me with a voice of thunder, and I have felt, He is a God that can punish enimies. Why should thy excellent wit, His gift, be so blinded, that thou shouldst give no glory to the giver? Is it pestilent Machivilian pollicie that thou hast studied? O punish follie! What are his rules but meere confused mockeries, able to extirpate in small time the generation of mankinde. For if *sic volo, sic jubeo*, hold in those that are able to command; and if it be lawfull, *fas et nefas*, to doe anything that is beneficiall, onely tyrants should possesse the earth; and they, striving to exceede in tyranny, should each to other bee a slaughter-man; till the mightiest outliving all, one stroke were left for death, that in one age mans life should ende. The brother of this diabolicall atheisme is dead, and in his life had never the felicitie he aimed at; but as he began in craft, lived in feare, and ended in despaire. *Quum inscrutabilia sunt Dei judicicia?* This murderer of many brethreu had his conscience seared like Caine; this betrayer of him that gave his life for him inherited the por-





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tion of Judas ; this apostata perished as ill as Julian: and wilt thou, my friend, be his disciple? Looke unto me, by him perswaded to that libertie, and thou shalt finde it an infernall bondage. I knowe the least of my demerits merit this miserable death ; but wilfull striving against knowne truth exceedeth al the terrors of my soule. Defer not, with me, till this last point of extremitie ; for little knowest thou how in the end thou shalt be visited.

“ With thee I joyne young Juvenall, that byting satyrst that lastlie with mee together writ a comedie. Sweete boy, might I advise thee, be advised, and get not many enemies by bitter words ; inveigh against vaine men, for thou canst do it, no man better, no man so wel ; thou hast a libertie to reprove all, and name none ; for one being spoken to, al are offended ; none being blamed, no man is injured. Stop shallow water still running, it will rage ; tread on a worme, and it will turne ; then blame not schollers vexed with sharpe lines, if they reprove thy too much libertie of reproofe.

“ And thou, no lesse deserving then the other two, in some things rarer, in nothing inferiour ; driven (as myselfe) to extreame shifts ; a little have I to say to thee ; and were it not an idolatrous oth, I would sweare by sweet S. George thou art unworthie better hap, sith thou dependest on so meane a stay. Base minded men al three of you, if by my miserie ye be not warned ; for unto none of you,

like me, sought those burre to cleave; those puppits, I meane, that speake from our mouths, those anticks garnisht in our colours. Is it not strange that I, to whom they al have beene beholding, is it not like that you to whome they all have beene beholding, shall, were ye in that case that I am now, be both at once of them forsaken? Yes, trust them not; for there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that, with his *Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hide*, supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes Factotum*, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrie. O that I might intreate your rare wits to be imployed in more profitable courses, and let those apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions! I know the best husband of you all will never prove an usurer, and the kindest of them all wil never proove a kinde nurse; yet, whilst you may, seeke you better maisters, for it is pittie men of such rare wits should be subject to the pleasures of such rude groomes."

Here Greene begins by addressing three dramatists—Marlowe, Peele, and probably Lodge—and then turns to the actors—"puppits that speake from our mouths" (that is, declaim our productions), against whom his wrath is mainly directed. He then goes on to refer incidentally to "two more, that both have writ against these buckram gentlemen" (the actors), but does not dwell upon them.

He then reverts to the three dramatists: "But now returne I againe to you three," and urges them to take warning from his wretched fate: "Delight not, as I have done, in irreligious oaths; for from the blasphemers house a curse shall not depart. Despise drunkennes, which wasteth the wit and making [*sic*] men all equal unto beasts. Flie lust, as the deathsman of the soule, and defile not the temple of the Holy Ghost. Abhorre thou epicures, whose loose life hath made religion lothsome to your eares; . . . remember Robert Greene, whome they have so often flattered, perishes now for want of comfort."

In December of the same year, Henry Chettle, who had published Greene's pamphlet for him, brought out his own *Kind-Harts Dreame*, in the preface to which he says:—

"About three moneths since died M. Robert Greene, leaving many papers in sundry bookesellers hands, among other his *Groatsworth of Wit*, in which a letter, written to divers play-makers, is offensively by one or two of them taken; and because on the dead they cannot be avenged, they wilfully forge in their conceites a living author; and after tossing it two and fro, no remedy but it must light on me. How I have all the time of my conversing in printing hindred the bitter inveying against schollers, it hath been very well knowne; and how in that I dealt, I can sufficiently proove. With neither of them that take offence was I acquainted,

and with one of them I care not if I never be. The other, whome at that time I did not so much spare as since I wish I had, for that, as I have moderated the heate of living writers, and might have usde my owne discretion, — especially in such a case, the author beeing dead, — that I did not I am as sory as if the originall fault had beene my fault, because myselfe have seene his demeanor no lesse civill, than he exelent in the qualitie he professes; — besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writting, that aprooves his art. For the first, whose learning I reverence, and, at the perusing of Greenes booke, stroke out what then in conscience I thought he in some displeasure writ; or, had it beene true, yet to publish it was intollerable; him I would wish to use me no worse than I deserve. I had onely in the copy this share; — it was il written, as sometimes Greenes hand was none of the best; licensd it must be ere it could bee printed, which could never be if it might not be read. To be breife, I writ it over; and, as neare as I could, followed the copy; onely in that letter I put something out, but in the whole booke not a worde in; for I protest it was all Greenes, not mine nor Maister Nashes, as some unjustly have affirmed.”

In this passage “The other, whome at that time I did not so much spare” is assumed by nearly all the biographers and critics to be Shakespeare; but

this is not absolutely clear. Chettle refers to Greene's letter as "written to divers *play-makers*," and as "offensively by one or two of *them* taken." The "one or two" appears from the context to mean just two: "With *neither* of them that take offence was I acquainted, and with *one* of them I care not if I never be. *The other*," etc. This "other," it would seem, must be one of the three "play-makers" *addressed* by Greene, not one of the "puppets," or actors, against whom he warns them. Some one suggests that Chettle did not have Greene's book before him when he wrote, and that, having been particularly impressed by the sneer at Shakespeare, he apologized for it and expressed his own high opinion of the victim, without observing that he had not made it quite clear to whom he referred; but this explanation seems to be a "trick of desperation" to which the author is driven by his reluctance to deprive Shakespeare of the praise generally supposed to be given him both as an actor and a writer. But the three "play-makers" were or had been actors as well.

Greene's reference to Shakespeare has been assumed to imply that he was both actor and author, and plagiarist also. "Beautified with our feathers" is taken to suggest the plagiarism; but it may rather refer to getting credit for declaiming what they had written. The "player's hide" that follows favours this interpretation, and "to bumbast out a blank verse" suggests speaking quite as

naturally as writing. Of course it may refer to both, as Shakespeare before 1592 had entered upon his dramatic apprenticeship. [See also p. 529 below.]

“A Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hide” is obviously a parody of “O tiger’s heart wrapp’d in a woman’s hide!” in 3 *Henry VI.* (i. 4. 137). That play, then, had been produced before Greene wrote in August, 1592, or earlier. The other plays of the trilogy (1 and 2 *Henry VI.*) had preceded it. It is almost certain that 1 *Henry VI.* was an old play by one or more authors which, as printed in the folio of 1623, had been slightly retouched by Shakespeare. The revised form was probably the *Henry VI.* which, according to Henslowe’s *Diary*, was acted March 3, 1591–92, and to which Nash alludes in his *Pierce Pennilesse*, printed in 1592, two editions appearing in that year. Nash says: “How would it have joyed brave Talbot (the terror of the French) to thinke that, after he had lyen two hundred yeare in his toomb, he should triumph againe on the stage, and have his bones new embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least, at severall times, who, in the tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding.”

Greene is generally assumed to have had a part in the authorship of the original play, and may have been assisted by Peele and Marlowe. The critics are almost unanimous in crediting Shakespeare with the scene (ii. 4) in which the white and



red roses are plucked by Plantagenet and Somerset; and the scene (v. 3. 45 fol.) of the wooing of Margaret by Suffolk also appears to be wholly or partly his. Knight and some others believe that all three parts of *Henry VI.* are entirely Shakespeare's.

In 2 and 3 *Henry VI.* we have unquestionably a larger proportion of Shakespeare's work, and the earlier plays on which they were founded are extant in editions printed in 1594 and 1595. These plays are entitled, respectively, "The First part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster;" and "The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke, and the death of good King Henrie the Sixt, with the whole contention between the two Houses Lancaster and Yorke." Second editions of both these plays appeared in 1600; and in 1619 a third edition of the two together was issued with the title: "The Whole Contention betweene the two Famous Houses, Lancaster and Yorke." This last was said to be "Written by William Shakespeare, Gent."

About 3240 lines of these old plays appear either in the same or in an altered form in 2 and 3 *Henry VI.*, the remainder of these latter, or about 2740 lines, being entirely new.

Various theories have been advanced with respect to the authorship of the earlier plays, and their relation to the later ones. Johnson, Steevens, Knight, Ulrici, Delius, and the Germans generally,

contend that Shakespeare wrote both the earlier and the later plays.

Of the other theories, which assume a mixed authorship for all the plays, that of Miss Jane Lee (*Transactions of New Shakspeare Society*, 1875-76) seems, on the whole, the most plausible. She takes the ground that Marlowe and Greene (and possibly Peele) were the authors of the old plays; and that Shakespeare and Marlowe, working together, recast these into the later ones. In the old plays, the parts of King Henry, Cardinal Beaufort, York (many of whose speeches, however, are by Greene), Suffolk, the two Cliffords, and Richard are assigned by Miss Lee to Marlowe, "with the reservation that in certain scenes written by Greene the parts of these characters were written by Greene also;" while Duke Humphrey (in a measure), the Duchess Eleanor, Clarence, Edward IV., Elizabeth, Sir John Hume, and Jack Cade belong to Greene.

"The *Third Part of Henry VI.*," as Miss Lee remarks, "underwent a much less thorough revision than the Second. Out of 3075 lines in *Part II.* there are 1715 new lines, some 840 altered lines (many but very slightly altered), and some 520 old lines. In *Part III.*, out of 2902 lines, there are about 1021 new lines, about 871 altered lines, and about 1010 old lines. Hence it is that in *Part III.* there are fewer resemblances of thought and verbal expression to Shakespeare's undoubted writings than in *Part II.*"

There are difficulties in all the theories, and these multiply as we study the plays more minutely. It is not easy, on the one hand, to deny Shakespeare a share in the early plays. The humorous Jack Cade scenes in the *Contention*, for instance, are too good for Greene, to whom they must be ascribed if they are not Shakespeare's. Miss Lee admits that they are "almost too good" for Greene, and says that we see him here at his best, while we see him at his worst in the earlier comic parts of the play. On the other hand, some of the passages which appear for the first time in *Henry VI.* are more like Marlowe than Shakespeare.

The *Contention* and the *True Tragedie* appear to have been founded on Hall's Chronicle rather than Holinshed's; but in the revision of the plays the latter was also used.

*Titus Andronicus* is another play, included in the folio of 1623 and in the modern editions of the dramatist, which must belong to this period, so far as any share that he may have had in it is concerned. The earliest known edition of it is a quarto published in 1600. A second edition appeared in 1611; but, like the former, with no name of author on the title-page. "A Noble Roman-Historye of Tytus Andronicus" was entered for publication in the Stationers' Registers on the 6th of February, 1593; and in Henslowe's *Diary* a "titus and ondronicus" is mentioned as acted for the first time on the 23d of January, 1594; but whether

either of those plays was the *Titus Andronicus* ascribed to Shakespeare it is impossible to say.

Langbaine (*Account of the English Dramatick Poets*, ed. 1691) says that *Titus Andronicus* was first printed in 1594, and "acted by the Earls of Derby, Pembroke, and Essex, their servants," the "Essex" being evidently an error for "Sussex;" the play, according to the title-page of 1600, having "sundry times beene played by the Right Honourable the Earle of Pembroke, the Earl of Darbie, the Earle of Sussex, and the Lorde Chamberlaine theyr Servants."

Ravenscroft, in the preface to his alteration of the play (1687), says: "I have been told by some anciently conversant with the stage, that it was not originally his [Shakespeare's], but brought by a private author to be acted, and he only gave some master-touches to one or two of the principal characters." Capell, Collier, Knight, and many of the Germans, believe that the play is Shakespeare's; but the majority of the English editors reject it entirely. The rest think that it was only touched up by the dramatist, and they are probably right. It is difficult to believe that he had any larger share in its composition than Ravenscroft allowed him. It may at first seem strange that his name should have come to be associated with a work in which we find so few traces of his hand; but he may have improved the old play in other ways than by re-writing any considerable portion of it,—by omis-

sions, re-arrangement of scenes, and the like — and its popularity in the revised form may have led to its being commonly known as “Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus*” (to distinguish it from the original version, whosever it may have been), until at length it got to be generally regarded as one of his own productions.

If Shakespeare wrote the play, it must have been at the very beginning of his career as an author — “1589, or earlier,” as Dowden suggests, when he was “a young man carried away by the influence of a *Sturm und Drang* (storm and stress) movement similar to that which urged Schiller to write his *Robbers*. *Titus Andronicus* belongs essentially to the pre-Shaksperian group of bloody tragedies, of which Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy* is the most conspicuous example. If it is of Shaksperian authorship, it may be viewed as representing the years of crude and violent youth before he had found his true self.” The popularity of the revised play is attested by the number of representations and by several early notices. Ben Jonson, in the Introduction to *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), indicates that it continued in favour even at that time. He says: “hee that will sweare Jeronimo or Andronicus are the best playes, yet shall passe unexcepted at heere as a man whose judgement shewes it is constant and hath stood still these five and twentie or thirty yeeres.”

When Shakespeare first tried his hand at wholly

original work it appears to have been in comedy; and *Love's Labour's Lost* was probably the play. The earliest edition of it that has come down to us is a quarto published in 1598, the title-page of which describes it as "a pleasant conceited comedie . . . presented before 'her Highnes this last Christmas," and as "by W. Shakespere."

The earliest mention of the play that has been discovered is in the following lines from a poem entitled *Alba, or the Months Mind of a Melancholy Lover*, by "R. T. Gentleman" (Robert Tofte), published in 1598:—

"*Love's Labour Lost* I once did see, a Play  
Y-cleped so, so called to my paine.  
Which I to heare to my small Ioy did stay,  
Giving attendance on my froward Dame:  
My misgiving minde presaging to me ill,  
Yet was I drawne to see it 'gainst my will.

. . . . .  
Each Actor plaid in cunning wise his part,  
But chiefly Those entrapt in Cupids snare;  
Yet All was fained, 't was not from the hart,  
They seemde to grieve, but yet they felt no care:  
'T was I that Griefe (indeed) did beare in brest,  
The others did but make a show in Iest."

It was doubtless written as early as 1591, and some critics date it two or three years earlier—Furnivall in 1588–89, and Grant White as "probably not later than 1588."

Among the marks of early style may be mentioned: the introduction of well-known old characters (besides "the Nine Worthies," we have what Biron (v. 2. 540) calls "the pedant, the braggart, the hedge priest, the fool, and the boy"); the observance of the "unities;" the abundance of rhyme, the doggerel, the sonnets (occasionally as speeches); the alliteration, or "affecting the letter," as Holofernes calls it; the quibbles, antitheses, repartees, "the sparkles of wit, like a blaze of fireworks" (Schlegel); the proverbial expressions; the peculiar and pedantic grammatical constructions; the words used in their native forms; the display of learning; the pairs of characters; the disguising and changing of persons; the chorus-like, alternate answers; the strained dialogue, etc. It is "a play of conversation and situation" (Furnivall), in which "depth of characterization is subordinate to elegance and sprightliness of dialogue" (Staunton).

The edition of 1598 is evidently, as the title-page informs us, "newly corrected and augmented." In two instances a lucky blunder of the printer has preserved the original form of a passage together with the revised version — the only such illustrations of the dramatist "in the workshop" that are to be found in all his works. Elsewhere we have examples of early and later composition in different passages of a play, but never in the same passage.

In Biron's long speech (iv. 3. 284 fol.) we have these lines: —

“For when would you, my lord, — or you, — or you, —  
 Have found the ground of study's excellence  
 Without the beauty of a woman's face?  
 From women's eyes this doctrine I derive:  
 They are the ground; the books, the academes,  
 From whence doth spring the true Promethean fire.”

“For where is any author in the world  
 Teaches such beauty as a woman's eye?  
 Learning is but an adjunct to ourself,  
 And where we are our learning likewise is;  
 Then when ourselves we see in ladies' eyes,  
 Do we not likewise see our learning there?  
 O, we have made a vow to study, lords,  
 And in that vow we have forsworn our books.”

This belongs to the play as first written. Some editors strike it out; but it seems better (as I have done in my edition) to retain it enclosed in brackets. It re-appears in the revision of the speech thus: —

“For when would you, my liege, — or you, — or you, —  
 In leaden contemplation have found out  
 Such fiery numbers as the prompting eyes  
 Of beauty's tutors have enrich'd you with?

Never durst poet touch a pen to write  
 Until his ink were temper'd with Love's sighs;  
 O, then his lines would ravish savage ears  
 And plant in tyrants mild humility!  
 From women's eyes this doctrine I derive:  
 They sparkle still the right Promethean fire;



They are the books, the arts, the academes,  
 That show, contain, and nourish all the world,  
 Else none at all in anight proves excellent.  
 Then fools you were these women to forswear,  
 Or keeping what is sworn, you will prove fools.  
 For wisdom's sake, a word that all men love,  
 Or for love's sake, a word that loves all men,  
 Or for men's sake, the authors of these women,  
 Or women's sake, by whom we men are men,  
 Let us once lose our oaths to find ourselves,  
 Or else we lose ourselves to keep our oaths."

Again, in v. 2. 817 fol., we find this bit of the original play:—

*Biron.* And what to me, my love? and what to me?  
*Rosaline.* You must be purged too, your sins are rank,  
 You are attaint with faults and perjury;  
 Therefore if you my favour mean to get,  
 A twelvemonth shall you spend, and never rest,  
 But seek the weary beds of people sick."

In the revision Biron's question is transferred to Dumain: "But what to me, my love? but what to me?" and the passage is altered and expanded thus:—

*Biron.* Studies my lady? mistress, look on me;  
 Behold the window of my heart, mine eye,  
 What humble suit attends thy answer there;  
 Impose some service on me for thy love.  
*Rosaline.* Oft have I heard of you, my Lord Biron,

Before I saw you ; and the world's large tongue  
 Proclaims you for a man replete with mocks,  
 Full of comparisons and wounding flouts,  
 Which you on all estates will execute  
 That lie within the mercy of your wit.  
 To weed this wormwood from your fruitful brain,  
 And therewithal to win me, if you please, —  
 Without the which I am not to be won, —  
 You shall this twelvemonth term from day to day  
 Visit the speechless sick, and still converse  
 With groaning wretches ; and your task shall be,  
 With all the fierce endeavour of your wit  
 To enforce the pained impotent to smile."

The plot of the play, so far as we know, was original with Shakespeare. Dowden remarks: "The play is precisely such a one as a clever young man might imagine, who had come lately from the country — with its 'daisies pied and violets blue,' its 'merry larks,' its maidens who 'bleach their summer smocks,' its pompous parish schoolmaster and its dull constable (a great public official in his own eyes) — to the town, where he was surrounded by more brilliant unrealities, and affectations of dress, of manner, of language, and of ideas. *Love's Labour's Lost* is a dramatic plea on behalf of nature and of common-sense, against all that is unreal and affected."

The hero of the play is the King of Navarre, and Sidney Lee has shown (*Gentleman's Magazine*, October, 1880) that Biron and Longville bear the

names of the two most strenuous supporters of the real king, and that the name of Dumain is an Anglicized form of that of the Duc de Maine or Mayenne, who was so often mentioned in popular accounts of French affairs in connection with Navarre that Shakespeare was led to number him also among the king's supporters. Mothe or La Mothe, from whom the page gets his name, was a French ambassador long popular in London. M. Le Mot is a courtier in Chapman's *Humorous Days Mirth*, 1599, and is alluded to in Middleton's *Blurt, Master Constable*, 1602. Armado is a caricature of a half-crazed Spaniard known as "fantastical Monarcho," who for many years hung about the Court of Elizabeth. Sundry other persons and topics of the time are alluded to in the play.

*The Two Gentlemen of Verona* was probably Shakespeare's next comedy, written in or about 1591, though not printed, so far as we know, until it appeared in the folio of 1623.

Some of the incidents in the plot are identical with those in the *Story of the Shepherdess Felismena* in the *Diana Enamorada* of Jorge de Montemayor, a Portuguese poet and novelist (though this romance was written in Spanish), who was born in 1520. The *Diana* was translated by Bartholomew Yong (or Young) as early as 1583, though his version was not printed until 1598. The tale appears to have been dramatized in 1584 in the *History of Felix and Philomena*, acted at Greenwich. Shakespeare may

also have drawn some material from Bandello's novel of *Apollonius and Sylla* (translated in 1581) and from Sidney's *Arcadia*. He was, however, but slightly indebted to any of these sources, and some of the coincidences that have been pointed out may be accidental.

Haumer, and after him Upton, thought the style of the play so little like Shakespeare's general dramatic manner that they were confident "he could have had no other hand in it than enlivening, with some speeches and lines, thrown in here and there," the production of some inferior dramatist, from whose thoughts his own are easily to be distinguished, "as being of a different stamp from the rest;" but this view was refuted by Johnson, and has been rejected by all succeeding critics. On the contrary, as Verplanck remarks, "The play is full of undeniable marks of the author in its strong resemblance in taste and style to his earlier plays and poems, as well as in the indications it gives of his future power of original humour and vivid delineation of character. It, indeed, has the characteristics of a young author who had already acquired a ready and familiar mastery of poetic diction and varied versification, and who had studied nature with a poet's eyes; for the play abounds in brief passages of great beauty and melody. There are here, too, as in his other early dramas, outlines of thought and touches of character, sometimes faintly or imperfectly sketched, to which he afterwards

returned in his maturer years, and wrought them out into his most striking scenes and impressive passages. Thus, Julia and Silvia are, both of them, evidently early studies of female love and loveliness, from the unpractised 'prentice hand' of the same great artist who was afterwards to portray with matchless delicacy and truth the deeper affections, the nobler intellects, and the varied imaginative genius of Viola, of Rosalind, and of Imogen. Indeed, as a drama of character, however inferior to his own after-creations, it is, when compared with the works of his predecessors and contemporaries, superior alike in taste and in originality."

The precise order of these early comedies cannot be definitely settled, but *The Comedy of Errors* probably followed *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, though some critics believe that it preceded that play. All agree that it was one of the earliest of the plays, though first printed in the folio of 1623. It is probably the "*Comedy of Errors*, like to Plautus his *Menechmus*," which, according to the *Gesta Grayorum*, was "played by the players" at Gray's Inn, one night in December, 1594. The pun in iii. 2. 121 on France "making war against her heir" would seem to show that the play was written between August, 1589, when the civil war about the succession of Henry IV. began, and July, 1593, when it ended. A writer in the *North British Review* (April, 1870) attempts to show that events in French history of earlier date are alluded to.

Henry of Navarre, he says, became *heir* to the throne on the death of the Duke of Anjou in 1584, and remained so until he became king on the murder of Henry III., Aug. 2, 1589.

The majority of editors date the play in 1591, though some place it as early as 1589 and others as late as 1592.

The general idea of the plot is taken from Plautus, but with material changes and additions. To the twin brothers of the Latin dramatist are added twin servants, and though this increases the improbability, yet, as Schelgel observes, "when once we have lent ourselves to the first, which certainly borders on the incredible, we should not probably be disposed to cavil about the second; and if the spectator is to be entertained with mere perplexities, they cannot be too much varied."

*The Comedy of Errors* is the shortest of the plays, having only 1778 lines ("Globe" edition), while *Hamlet*, the longest, has 3930, *Richard III.* 3620, etc. The next shortest is *The Tempest* with 2065, the next *Macbeth* with 2108, and the next *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* with 2180.

Coleridge, commenting on this play in his *Literary Remains*, remarks: "The myriad-minded man, our, and all men's, Shakspeare, has in this piece presented us with a legitimate farce in exactest consonance with the philosophical principles and character of farce, as distinguished from comedy and from entertainments. A proper farce is mainly

distinguished from comedy by the license allowed, and even required, in the fable, in order to produce strange and laughable situations. The story need not be probable, it is enough that it is possible. A comedy would, scarcely allow even the two Antipholuses; because, although there have been instances of almost indistinguishable likeness in two persons, yet these are mere individual accidents, *casus ludentis naturæ*, and the *verum* will not excuse the *inverisimile*. But farce dares add the two Dromios, and is justified in so doing by the laws of its end and constitution. In a word, farces commence in a postulate, which must be granted."

But though the play is a farce rather than a comedy, so far as the plot is based upon the confusion of identity in the adventures of the twin brothers and the twin slaves, it is not a mere farce — something, indeed, which Shakespeare seems to have been incapable of writing. With this farcical plot he has interwoven a pathetic story of domestic affection and misfortune, with which the play begins and with which it ends, when the sorrow upon which the curtain rose is turned to gladness as it falls. There is nothing of this in the old Latin play, and only one or two of the commentators have alluded to the manner in which the young Shakespeare idealized and ennobled the story. Drake, in his *Shakespeare and his Times* (1817), hints at it thus: "In a play of which the plot is so intricate, occupied in a great measure by mere personal mis-

takes and their whimsical results, no elaborate development of character can be expected; yet is the portrait of Ægeon touched with a discriminative hand, and the pressure of age and misfortune is so painted as to throw a solemn, dignified, and impressive tone of colouring over this part of the fable, contrasting well with the lighter scenes which immediately follow — a mode of relief which is again resorted to at the close of the drama, where the reunion of Ægeon and Æmilia, and the recognition of their children, produce an interest in the dénouement of a nature more affecting than the tone of the preceding scenes had taught us to expect.”

The only other play which the critics generally agree in assigning, at least in its earliest form, to the same period as the comedies already mentioned, is the tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*, which was probably begun as early as 1591, though it may not have attained its final shape until 1596 or 1597.

The earliest edition of the play, so far as we know, was a quarto printed in 1597, the title-page of which asserts that “it hath been often (with great applause) plaid publicquely.” A second quarto appeared in 1599, declared to be “newly corrected, augmented, and amended.”

Two other quartos appeared before the folio of 1623, one in 1609 and the other undated; and it is doubtful which was the earlier. The undated quarto is the first that bears the name of the author (“Written by W. *Shake-speare*”), but this does not



occur in some copies of the edition. A fifth quarto was published in 1637. .

The first quarto is much shorter than the second, the former having only 2232 lines, including the prologue, while the latter has 3007 lines (Daniel). Some editors believe that the first quarto gives the author's first draft of the play, and the second the form it assumed after he had revised and enlarged it; but the majority of the best critics agree substantially in the opinion that the first quarto was a pirated edition, and represents in an abbreviated and imperfect form the play subsequently printed in full in the second. The former was "made up partly from copies of portions of the original play, partly from recollection and from notes taken during the performance;" the latter was from an authentic copy, and a careful comparison of the text with the earlier one shows that in the meantime the play "underwent revision, received some slight augmentation, and in some few places must have been entirely rewritten."

The internal evidence confirms the opinion that the tragedy was an early work of the poet, and that it was subsequently "corrected, augmented, and amended." There is a good deal of rhyme, and much of it in the form of alternate rhyme. The alliteration, the frequent playing upon words, and the lyrical character of many passages also lead to the same conclusion.

Girolamo della Corte, in his *Storia di Verona*,

1594, relates the story of the play as a true event occurring in 1303; but the earlier annalists of the city are silent on the subject. A tale very similar, the scene of which is laid in Siena, appears in a collection of novels by Masuccio di Salerno, printed at Naples in 1476; but Luigi da Porto, in his *Giulietta*, published about 1530, is the first to call the lovers Romeo and Juliet, and to make them the children of the rival Veronese houses. The story was retold in French by Adrian Sevin, about 1542; and a poetical version of it was published at Venice in 1553. It is also found in Bandello's *Novelle*, 1554; and five years later Pierre Boistreau translated it, with some variations, into French in his *Histoire de Deux Amans*. The earliest English version of the romance appeared in 1562 in a poem by Arthur Brooke founded upon Boistreau's novel, and entitled *Romeus and Juliet*. A prose translation of Boistreau's novel was given in Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*, in 1567. It was undoubtedly from these English sources, and chiefly from the poem by Brooke, that Shakespeare drew his material. It is to be noted, however, that Brooke speaks of having seen "the same argument lately set forth on stage;" and it is possible that this lost play may also have been known to Shakespeare, though we have no reason to suppose that he made any use of it. That he followed Brooke's poem rather than Paynter's prose version is evident from a careful comparison of the two with the play.

Grant White remarks: "The tragedy follows the poem with a faithfulness which might be called slavish, were it not that any variation from the course of the old story was entirely unnecessary for the sake of dramatic interest, and were there not shown in the progress of the action, in the modification of one character, and in the disposal of another, all peculiar to the play, self-reliant dramatic intuition of the highest order. For the rest, there is not a personage or a situation, hardly a speech, essential to Brooke's poem, which has not its counterpart — its exalted and glorified counterpart — in the tragedy. . . . In brief, *Romeo and Juliet* owes to Shakespeare only its dramatic form and its poetic decoration. But what an exception is the latter! It is to say that the earth owes to the sun only its verdure and its flowers, the air only its perfume and its balm, the heavens only their azure and their glow. Yet this must not lead us to forget that the original tale is one of the most truthful and touching among the few that have entranced the ear and stirred the heart of the world for ages, or that in Shakespeare's transfiguration of it his fancy and his youthful fire had a much larger share than his philosophy or his imagination."

Coleridge, in his *Notes and Lectures upon Shakespeare*, says: "The stage in Shakspeare's time was a naked room with a blanket for a curtain; but he made it a field for monarchs. That law of unity which has its foundations, not in the factitious

necessity of custom, but in nature itself, the unity of feeling, is everywhere and at all times observed by Shakspeare in his plays. Read *Romeo and Juliet*: all is youth and spring — youth with its follies, its virtues, its precipitancies; spring with its odours, its flowers, and its transiency. It is one and the same feeling that commences, goes through, and ends the play. The old men, the Capulets and the Montagues, are not common old men; they have an eagerness, a heartiness, a vehemence, the effect of spring; with Romeo, his change of passion, his sudden marriage, and his rash death, are all the effects of youth; whilst in Juliet love has all that is tender and melancholy in the nightingale, all that is voluptuous in the rose, with whatever is sweet in the freshness of spring; but it ends with a long deep sigh like the last breeze of the Italian evening.”

*Richard III.*, the first of the English historical plays which, in the opinion of the majority of critics (with whom I heartily agree), is entirely the work of Shakespeare, may have been written as early as 1592. Dowden considers that it can hardly be later than 1593, and Grant White is inclined to put it in that year or early in 1594. It naturally follows the *Henry VI.* trilogy, in which Shakespeare must have become keenly interested during his work of revision, and it is probable that he began the continuation of the history soon afterwards. The earliest known edition of the play was published in

1597. It was not until that year that the reputation of the dramatist appears to have been sufficiently established to lead booksellers to print any of his plays. The first edition did not bear his name, but the second, published the next year (1598), adds "By William Shake-speare" to the title-page. Other quarto editions appeared in 1602, 1605, 1612, and 1622. All four are said to be "newly augmented," but they contain nothing that is not found in the second quarto, unless it be additional errors of the press.

The text of the play in the folio of 1623 differs materially from that of the quartos. Besides many little changes in expression, it contains several passages — one of more than fifty lines — not found in the earlier texts; while, on the other hand, it omits sundry lines — in some cases, essential to the context — given in the quartos. The play is, moreover, one of the worst printed in the folio, and the quartos often help us in correcting the typographical errors. Which is on the whole the better text, and what is the relation of the one to the other, are questions which have been much disputed, but probably will never be satisfactorily settled. The Cambridge editors' remark: "The respective origin and authority of the 1st quarto and 1st folio texts of *Richard III.* is perhaps the most difficult question which presents itself to an editor of Shakespeare. In the case of most of the plays a brief survey leads him to form a definite judgment; in this, the most

attentive examination scarcely enables him to propose with confidence a hypothetical conclusion." Staunton says: "The diversity has proved, and will continue to prove, a source of incalculable trouble and perpetual dispute to the editors, since, although it is admitted by every one properly qualified to judge, that a reasonably perfect text can only be formed from the two versions, there will always be a conflict of opinions regarding some of the readings." Furnivall considers "the making of the best text" of the play "the hardest puzzle in Shakspeare editing."

A seventh quarto edition was printed in 1629, but the text is not from the folio but from the quarto of 1622; and an eighth quarto (1634) is a reprint of the seventh.

James Russell Lowell, in a lecture at Chicago, February 22d, 1887, expressed the opinion that the play was merely revised by Shakespeare. "It appears to me," he said, "that an examination of *Richard III.* plainly indicates that it is a play which Shakespeare adapted to the stage, making additions, sometimes longer and sometimes shorter; and toward the end he either grew weary of his work or was pressed for time, and left the older author, whoever he was, pretty much to himself." The procession of ghosts in the play, Lowell says, always struck him "as ludicrous and odd rather than impressive."

This does not differ essentially from the decision

to which Mr. Fleay had come in his *Chronicle History of Shakespeare*, published in 1886. He believes that the earlier play was Marlowe's, partly written in 1593, but left unfinished at his death, and completed and altered by Shakespeare in 1594.

Even so cautious and conservative a critic as Halliwell-Phillipps recognizes indications of earlier work in the play. After referring to the historical sources of the plot in More and Holinshed, he adds: "There are also slight traces of an older play to be observed, passages which may belong to an inferior hand, and incidents, such as that of the rising of the ghosts, suggested probably by similar ones in a more ancient composition. That the play of *Richard III.*, as we now have it, is essentially Shakespeare's, cannot admit of a doubt; but as little can it be questioned that to the circumstance of an anterior work on the subject having been used do we owe some of its weakness and excessively turbulent character. No copy of this older play is known to exist, but one brief speech and the two following lines have been accidentally preserved:—

‘My liege, the Duke of Buckingham is ta'en,  
And Banister is come for his reward’—

[compare *Richard III.* iv. 4. 529: ‘My liege, the Duke of Buckingham is taken’], from which it is clear that the new dramatist did not hesitate to adopt an occasional line from his predecessor, al-

though he entirely omitted the character of Banister. Both plays must have been successful, for, notwithstanding the great popularity of Shakespeare's, the more ancient one sustained its ground on the English stage until the reign of Charles I."

The fact appears to be, as other critics have noted, that Shakespeare when he wrote *Richard III.* was still under the influence of Marlowe, and modelled the play after that dramatist. "It was Marlowe's characteristic," as Furnivall remarks, "to embody in a character, and realize with terrific force, the workings of a single passion. In *Tamburlaine* he personified the lust of dominion, in *Faustus* the lust of forbidden power and knowledge, in *Barabas (The Jew of Malta)* the lust of wealth and blood. In *Richard III.* Shakspeare embodied ambition, and sacrificed his whole play to this one figure. . . . The weakest part of the play is the scene of the citizens' talk; and the poorness of it, and the monotony of the women's curses, have given rise to the theory that in *Richard III.* Shakspeare was only re-writing an old play, of which he let bits stand. But though I once thought this possible, I have since become certain that it is not so. The wooing of Anne by Richard has stirred me, in reading it aloud, almost as much as anything else in Shakspeare. Note, too, how the first lines of the play lift you out of the mist and confusion of the *Henry VI.* plays into the sun of Shakspeare's genius."



Oechelhäuser (*Essay über Richard III.*) well says that this play marks "the significant boundary-stone which separates the works of Shakespeare's youth from the immortal works of the period of his fuller splendour."

Richard Burbage was particularly celebrated in the part of Richard in this play. The line, "A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!" was rendered by him with so much vigour and effect that it came to be imitated, and sometimes burlesqued, by contemporary writers. "The speech made such an impression on Marston that it appears in his works, not merely in its authentic form, but satirized and travestied into such lines as, 'A man! a man! a kingdom for a man!' (*Scourge of Villanie*, 1598); 'A boate! a boate! a boate! a full hundred markes for a boate!' (*Eastward Hoe*, 1605); 'A foole! a foole! a foole! my coxcombe for a foole!' (*Parasitaster*, 1606). Burbage continued to act the part of Richard until his death in 1619, and his supremacy in the character lingered for many years in the recollection of the public." Corbet, the witty and poetical Bishop of Oxford, in his *Iter Boreale*—a poetical narrative of a journey, in the manner of Horace's *Journey to Brundisium*, first printed in 1617—thus incidentally records the popularity of the play and of its theatrical hero, in his account of a visit to Bosworth Field (misquoted by all the editors):—

" Mine host was full of ale and history,  
 And in the morning when he brought us nigh  
 Where the two Roses join'd, you would suppose  
 Chaucer ne'er made the Romaunt of the Rose.  
 Hear him. See ye yon wood? There Richard lay  
 With his whole army. Look the other way,  
 And, lo! where Richmond in a bed of gorse  
 Encamp'd himself o'er night, and all his force:  
 Upon this hill they met. Why, he could tell  
 The inch where Richmond stood, where Richard fell.  
 Besides what of his knowledge he could say,  
 He had authentic notice from the play;  
 Which I might guess by 's must'ring up the ghosts,  
 And policies not incident to hosts;  
 But chiefly by that one perspicuous thing  
 Where he mistook a player for a king.  
 For when he would have said, King Richard died,  
 And call'd, A horse! a horse! he Burbage cried."

*Richard II.* was written soon after *Richard III.*, though, like that play, it was not printed until 1597, in a quarto edition without the author's name, which was added in a second edition the next year.

A third quarto appeared in 1608, "with new additions of the Parliament Sceane, and the deposing of King Richard," as the title-page informs us. It was reprinted in 1615 with the same title-page. A fifth quarto, apparently from the text of the second folio (1632), was issued in 1634.

The "new additions" of the third quarto, which are retained in the succeeding editions, occur in the

first scene of act iv., beginning with line 154, "May it please you, lords, to grant the commons' suit?" and ending with line 317 (318 in editions that retain "Here, cousin" as line 182), "That rise thus nimbly by a true King's fall." Though not printed during the life of Elizabeth, there can be little doubt that they formed part of the play as originally written; for they agree with the act in style and rhythm, and are the natural introduction to the Abbot's speech (line 321): "A woeful pageant have we here beheld." Their suppression in the earlier editions was probably for fear of offending Elizabeth, who was very sensitive upon the subject of the deposition of an English sovereign. It had been often attempted in her own case, and she did not like to be reminded that it had been accomplished in Richard's. It is said that once when Lambarde, the keeper of the records in the Tower, in showing her a portion of the rolls he had prepared, came to the reign of Richard II., she exclaimed, "I am Richard the Second; know ye not that?" In 1599 Sir John Haywarde was severely censured in the Star Chamber, and committed to prison, for his "History of the First Part of the Life and Reign of King Henry IV.," which contained an account of the deposition of Richard.

There was another play, and not improbably two other plays, on the same subject, extant in Shakespeare's time, but now lost. On the afternoon of

the day preceding the insurrection of the Earl of Essex in 1601, Sir Gilly Merrick, one of his friends, had a play acted before a company of his fellow-conspirators, the subject of which was "deposing Richard II." It could scarcely have been Shakespeare's, for it is described as an "obsolete tragedy," and the players are said to have complained "that the play was old, and they should have loss in playing it, because few would come to it."

In the Bodleian Library at Oxford there is a manuscript diary by Dr. Simon Forman, in which allusion is made to a play of *Richard II.* acted at the Globe Theatre, April 30, 1611. This play, however, began with Wat Tyler's rebellion, and seems to have differed in other respects from Shakespeare's.

There is no reason for supposing that Shakespeare was indebted to either of these plays (which some critics suppose to be the same) or to any earlier one on the subject. His principal authority for the historical facts he has used was Holinshed's *Chronicles*, the first edition of which was published in 1577. The dramatist used the second edition (1586-87), as the withering of the bay-trees, alluded to in ii. 4. 8 ("The bay-trees in our country are all wither'd"), is not found in the first.

The date of the play is fixed by some of the editors in 1593 and by others in 1594 or 1595. Sidney Lee is probably right in putting it "very

early in 1593." He adds: "Marlowe's tempestuous vein is less apparent in *Richard II.* than in *Richard III.*," but believes the play "was clearly suggested by Marlowe's *Edward II.*," closely imitating that drama "throughout its exposition of the leading theme — the development and collapse of the weak king's character."

Though "unsuited for the stage," Coleridge regarded *Richard II.* as "the most admirable of all Shakespeare's purely historical plays." He adds: "The two parts of *Henry IV.* form a species by themselves, which may be named the mixed drama. The distinction does not depend on the mere quality of historical events in the play compared with the fictions — for there is as much history in *Macbeth* as in *Richard* — but in the relation of the history to the plot. In the purely historical plays, the history forms the plot; in the mixed, it directs it; in the rest, as *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Cymbeline*, *Lear*, it subserves it. . . . The spirit of [patriotic reminiscence is the all-permeating soul of this noble work. It is, perhaps, the most purely historical of Shakespeare's dramas. There are not in it, as in the others, characters introduced merely for the purpose of giving a greater individuality and realness, as in the comic parts of *Henry IV.*, by presenting, as it were, our very selves. Shakespeare avails himself of every opportunity to effect the great object of the historic drama, that, namely, of familiarizing the people to the great names of their

country, and thereby of exciting a steady patriotism, a love of just liberty, and a respect for all those fundamental institutions of social life which bind men together."

The date of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* has been the subject of much controversy, and the decisions of the critics concerning it have been widely divergent, ranging from 1590 to 1598 and including every year between. There can, however, be no reasonable doubt that it was one of the earliest of the plays, and that it belongs to the group of comedies already considered. In its present form it is the bright consummate flower of this group, but, though no early title-page refers to it as "corrected," the internal evidence indicates that it was begun at a very early period in Shakespeare's career as a writer and not finished until several years later, or was finished very early and revised several years later. It is remarkable that only two or three of the critics have recognized this fact. Verplanck, in his edition of the play (New York, 1847) was, I believe, the first (he says he does "not know that it has appeared so to any one else") to reckon the play as one of those which "were first written in a comparative immaturity of the author's genius, and afterwards received large alterations and additions." He thinks that "the rhyming dialogue, and the peculiarities of much of the versification in those scenes, the elaborate elegance, the quaint conceits, and artificial refinements of thought in the whole

episode (if it may be termed so) of Helena and Hermia and their lovers, certainly partake of the taste and manner of the more juvenile comedies [*Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, etc.], while in other poetic scenes 'the strain we hear is of a higher mood,' and belongs to a period of fuller and more conscious power." He therefore concludes that the play "was originally written in a very different form from that in which we now have it, several years before the date of its present shape," and that it "was subsequently remodelled, after a long interval, with the addition of the heroic personages, and all the dialogue between Oberon and Titania, . . . the rhyming dialogue and the whole perplexity of the Athenian lovers being retained, with slight change, from the more boyish comedy."

Grant White, ten years later (1857), says of the play: "Although as a whole it is the most exquisite, the daintiest, and most fanciful creation that exists in poetry, and abounds in passages worthy even of Shakespeare in his full maturity, it also contains whole scenes which are hardly worthy of his 'prentice hand that wrought *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *The Comedy of Errors*, and which yet bear the unmistakable marks of his unmistakable pen. These scenes are the various interviews between Demetrius and Lysander, Hermia and Helen, in acts ii. and iii. It is difficult to believe that such lines as

‘ Do not say so, Lysander, say not so.  
 What though he love your Hermia? *Lord, what though?*’  
 and

‘ When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?  
 Is ’t not enough, is ’t not enough, *young man,*  
 That I did never, no, nor never can,’ etc.—

it is difficult to believe that these, and many others of a like character which accompany them, were written by Shakespeare after he had produced even *Venus and Adonis* and the plays mentioned above, and when he could write the poetry of the other parts of this very comedy. There seems, therefore, warrant for the opinion that this drama was one of the very first conceptions of the young poet; that, living in a rural district where tales of household fairies were rife among his neighbours, memories of these were blended in his youthful reveries with images of the classic heroes that he found in the books which we know he read so eagerly; that perhaps in some midsummer’s night he, in very deed, did dream a dream and see a vision of this comedy, and went from Stratford up to London with it partly written; that, when there, he found it necessary at first to forego the completion of it for labour that would find readier acceptance at the theatre; and that afterward, when he had more freedom of choice, he reverted to his early production, and in 1594 worked it up into the form in which it was produced.”



Whether this be in all particulars the history of the composition of the play or not, it seems to me the most satisfactory explanation of its peculiarities and inequalities that has been suggested. The crudeness of the versification in the lines that Grant White quotes has no parallel, or anything approaching to a parallel, anywhere else in Shakespeare's work. It is difficult, indeed, to believe that he could have written them even in his schoolboy days. It would seem that they must date back to a period many years before he touched up the *Titus Andronicus* (if he had anything to do with that play) or the 1 *Henry VI*. There is not a line so poor, so thin, so palpably and clumsily padded, in either of those patched-up dramas. If possible, they are worse than the best verses of Francis Bacon.

*A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was first printed in 1600, when quarto editions were brought out by two independent publishers, one of which appears, from internal evidence, to be a reprint of the other. The folio text, the only other early one, followed this second quarto, some of its obvious misprints being copied.

The plot of the play seems to be the poet's own, except for the few hints he may have got from Chaucer's *Knights Tale* and the life of Theseus in North's *Plutarch*. For the interlude of Pyramus and Thisbe he was doubtless indebted to Golding's translation of Ovid and Chaucer's *Legende of Goode Women*. Attempts have been made to prove that

certain poems in which Puck, or Robin Goodfellow, figures were written before the play, and that Shakespeare used them; but it has been satisfactorily proved that the play was the earlier. The popularity of the comedy led to the writing up of the old fairy stories by others. Here, as in other instances, Shakespeare had his imitators and plagiarists, but there is no evidence that he imitated or plagiarized from anybody. As Grant White remarks, "the plot of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* has no prototype in ancient story." Oberon, Titania, and Robin Goodfellow were familiar personages in the popular fairy mythology of the time, but Shakespeare has made them peculiarly his own. He was "the remodeller, and almost the inventor of our fairy system."

The play, indeed, as Verplanck remarks, "is, in several respects, the most remarkable composition of its author, and has probably contributed more to his general fame, as it has given a more peculiar evidence of the variety and brilliancy of his genius, than any other of his dramas. Not that it is in itself the noblest of his works, or even one of the highest order among them; but it is not only exquisite in its kind — it is also original and peculiar in its whole character, and of a class by itself. . . . It stands by itself, without any parallel; for *The Tempest*, which it resembles in its preternatural personages and machinery of the plot, is in other respects wholly dissimilar, is of quite another mood

in feeling and thought, and with, perhaps, higher attributes of genius, wants its peculiar fascination. Thus it is that the loss of this singularly beautiful production would, more than that of any other of his works, have abridged the measure of its author's fame, as it would have left us without the means of forming any estimate of the brilliant lightness of his 'forgetive' fancy, in its most sportive and luxuriant vein. . . . It has, in common with all his comedies, a perpetual intermixture of the essentially poetical with the purely laughable, yet is distinguished from all the rest by being (as Coleridge has happily defined its character) 'one continued specimen of the dramatized lyrical.' Its transitions are as rapid, and the images and scenes it presents to the imagination as unexpected and as remote from each other, as those of the boldest lyric; while it has also that highest perfection of the lyric art, the pervading unity of the poetic spirit—that continued glow of excited thought—which blends the whole rich and strange variety in one common effect of gay and dazzling brilliancy."

If Shakespeare did not begin his career as a writer until 1590, this period of his dramatic apprenticeship covers at most four years, or until the end of 1594; and during this time he revised more or less thoroughly *Titus Andronicus* and the three parts of *Henry VI.*, and wrote at least seven original plays—*Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *A Mid-*

*summer-Night's Dream, Romeo and Juliet, Richard III. and Richard II.* The two long poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* (to be considered in the next chapter) also belong to this period. To all this some biographers and critics would add all or nearly all of the *Sonnets*, which Sidney Lee, for instance, assumes to have been written between the spring of 1593 and the autumn of 1594. He also dates *King John* and *The Merchant of Venice* in 1594. And all this time Shakespeare was actively engaged in his profession as an actor. It seems quite impossible that before the end of 1594 he could have done any of this additional literary work, even if he began to write, as some suppose he did, as early as 1588 or 1589.

The earliest definite notice of Shakespeare's appearance on the stage that has been discovered is of his having been a player in two comedies acted before Elizabeth, at Greenwich Palace, in December, 1594. In the manuscript accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber we find these entries: "To William Kempe, William Shakespeare, and Richarde Burbage, servauntes to the Lord Chamberleyne, upon the Councelles warrant dated at Whitehall xv.th Marcij, 1594, for twoe severall comedies, or enterludes, shewed by them before her Majestie in Christmas tyme laste paste, — viz., upon St. Stephens daye and Innocentes daye, — xiiij. li. vj. s. viij. d., and by waye of her Majesties rewarde vj. li. xiiij. s. iiij. d., in all xx. li." . . . "For making

ready at Grenewich for the Qu. Majestie against her Highnes coming thether, by the space of viij. daies mense Decembr., 1594, as appereth by a bill signed by the Lord Chamberleyne, viij. li. xiiij. s. iiij. *d.*" . . . "To Tho: Sheffelde, under-keaper of her Majesties house at Grenewich for thallowaunce of viij. labourers there three severall nightes, at xij. *d.* the man by reason it was night-woorke, for making cleane the greate chamber, the Presence, the galleries and clossettes, mense Decembr., 1594, xxiiij. *s.*"

From this date Shakespeare was never known to write for any other managers than those with whom he was theatrically connected.

## CHAPTER IX.

### SHAKESPEARE'S POEMS

THE breadth of Shakespeare's literary tastes and aspirations in this 'prentice period of his career is shown by the fact that, just when his reputation as an actor and a dramatist was becoming established, he published two long narrative poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*.

*Venus and Adonis* was entered on the Stationers' Registers, April 18th, 1593, and must have been published before June 12th, of that year, as a manuscript reference to the purchase of a copy of the book has been discovered under that date.

A second edition appeared before June 25th, 1594; and other editions in 1596, 1599, 1600, 1602 (two editions), 1617, 1620, 1630 (two editions), and 1636. Besides these thirteen editions it is probable that there were others, as only single copies are extant of several of the known issues. Nothing was known of the fourth edition until a copy was discovered in 1867, and the single copy of the twelfth has come to light more recently.

The *Lucrece* was entered for publication May 9th, 1594, and was printed the same year. It was not

so popular as the *Venus and Adonis*, but editions are extant bearing the dates of 1598, 1600, 1607, 1616, 1624, 1632, and 1655; and there were probably others of which no copy has been discovered.

The *Venus and Adonis* was dedicated to the young Earl of Southampton, apparently without his permission, as the poet begins by saying, "I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your lordship." He adds a "vow to take advantage of all idle hours" till he can honour his patron "with some graver labour." This promise doubtless refers to the *Lucrece* which he also dedicates to Southampton, and in terms implying that he does it with the earl's permission: "The warrant I have of your honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done is yours; what I have to do is yours; being part in all I have, devoted yours."

Southampton was not quite twenty when the *Venus and Adonis* was dedicated to him, having been born October 6th, 1573. He was entered at St. John's College, Cambridge, on December 11, 1585, just after he was twelve; took his degree of Master of Arts before he was sixteen, on June 6, 1589; and soon after entered at Gray's Inn, London. He was a ward of Lord Burghley. He became a favourite of Queen Elizabeth's, but lost her favour, in 1595, for making love to Elizabeth Vernon (Essex's cousin), whom he married later, in 1598. All

his life he was a liberal patron of men of letters. He was particularly interested in the drama. In 1599 we find a reference to him as "going to plays every day." It may be added that later in life he was engaged in schemes for colonization in America. "He helped to equip expeditions to Virginia, and was treasurer of the Virginia Company. The map of the country commemorates his labours as a colonial pioneer. In his honour were named Southampton Hundred, Hampton River, and Hampton Roads in Virginia" (Sidney Lee).

In the dedication of *Venus and Adonis* Shakespeare calls the poem "the first heir of my invention" — that is, the first product of his imagination. It is a question whether this means that it was written before any of the plays, or that it was his first distinctively *literary* work, plays being then regarded as not belonging to "invention," or literature properly so called. Knight and some others take the expression in its literal sense. Knight, for instance, says: "We regard the *Venus and Adonis* as the production of a very young man, improved, perhaps, considerably in the interval between its first composition and its publication, but distinguished by peculiarities which belong to the wild luxuriance of youthful power, — such power, however, as few besides Shakspeare have ever possessed."

Baynes remarks: "All the facts and probabilities of the case seem however to indicate that the *Venus and Adonis*, as Shakespeare's earliest con-



siderable effort, must have been produced at Stratford some years before the appearance of Lodge's poem. With regard to the internal evidence in support of this view, Mr. Collier says: 'A young man so gifted would not, and could not, wait until he was five or six and twenty before he made considerable and most successful attempts at poetical composition; and we feel morally certain that *Venus and Adonis* was in being anterior to Shakespeare's quitting Stratford. It bears all the marks of youthful vigour, of strong passion, of luxuriant imagination, together with a force and originality of expression which betoken the first efforts of a great mind, not always well regulated in its taste. It seems to have been written in the open air of a fine country like Warwickshire, possessing all the freshness of the recent impression of natural objects; and we will go so far as to say that we do not think even Shakespeare himself could have produced it, in the form it bears, after he had reached the age of forty.' In relation to the last point I should be disposed to go further still, and say that it is very unlikely that Shakespeare either could or would have produced such a poem after he had found in the drama the free use of both his hands—the means of dealing effectively with action as well as passion."

But Shakespeare in London did not forget — with his love of nature he could not forget — his "woody Warwickshire;" and in London, as we have seen,

there were many large gardens, and the suburbs were distinctly rural. The Theatre and the Curtain, just outside the walls, were "in the fields," and wild flowers could be gathered almost at the door of the playhouse. Shakespeare, moreover, was a poet when he began to be a dramatist, and the semi-lyrical character of large portions of his earliest plays, as well as the delight in nature which they show, has been often pointed out by the critics. The poems, like these plays, abound in *reminiscences* of country life, but it is not necessary to suppose that they, any more than the plays, were actually written amid the scenes of country life.

In 1592 the theatres were closed from July to December on account of the plague, and it seems probable that the *Venus and Adonis* was mainly or wholly written during that half-year when the poet's interest was more or less diverted from dramatic composition into other literary channels. There is a striking allusion to the pestilence in the poem (505-510): —

“Long may they kiss each other for this cure!  
O, never let their crimson liveries wear!  
And as they last, their verdure still endure,  
To drive infection from the dangerous year!  
That the star-gazers, having writ on death,  
May say, the plague is banish'd by thy breath.”

The allusion may have been immediately suggested by the practice of strewing rooms with rue

and other strong-smelling herbs as a means of preventing infection. The reference to the astrologers, predicting death by their horoscopes, is also in keeping with the fatal season.

The title-page of *Venus and Adonis* bore this motto from the *Amores* of Ovid (i. 15. 35, 36): —

“Vilia miretur vulgus ; mihi flavus Apollo  
Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua ;”

which Marlowe renders thus : —

“Let base conceited wits admire vile things,  
Fair Phœbus lead me to the Muses' springs !”

The story of the poem was taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which had been translated by Golding in 1567 ; but Shakespeare was doubtless familiar with it in the original Latin, which he had read in the Stratford grammar school, and to which he probably recurred in Field's edition after he came to London. In the poem he does not follow Ovid very closely.

The critics of the eighteenth century were inclined to disparage Shakespeare's poems. Malone, in his concluding remarks upon the *Venus and Adonis*, and *Lucrece*, says : “We should do Shakespeare injustice were we to try them by a comparison with more modern and polished productions, or with our present idea of poetical excellence.” Knight, after quoting this, observes : “This was

written in the year 1780—the period which rejoiced in the ‘polished productions’ of Hayley and Miss Seward, and founded its ‘idea of poetical excellence’ on some standard which, secure in its conventional forms, might depart as far as possible from simplicity and nature, to give us words without thought, arranged in verses without music. It would be injustice indeed to Shakspeare to try the *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* by such a standard of ‘poetical excellence.’ But we have outlived that period.”

Coleridge was the first to do justice to the merits of the *Venus and Adonis*. He remarks: “It is throughout as if a superior spirit, more intuitive, more intimately conscious, even than the characters themselves, not only of every outward look and act, but of the flux and reflux of the mind in all its subtlest thoughts and feelings, were placing the whole before our view; himself meanwhile unparticipating in the passions, and actuated only by that pleasurable excitement which had resulted from the energetic fervour of his own spirit in so vividly exhibiting what it had so accurately and profoundly contemplated. . . . His *Venus and Adonis* seem at once the characters themselves, and the whole representation of those characters by the most consummate actors. You seem to be *told* nothing, but to see and hear everything. Hence it is, that, from the perpetual activity of attention required on the part of the reader,—from the

rapid flow, the quick change, and the playful nature of the thoughts and images,—and, above all, from the alienation, and, if I may hazard such an expression, the utter *aloofness* of the poet's own feelings from those of which he is at once the painter and the analyst,—that though the very subject cannot but detract from the pleasure of a delicate mind, yet never was poem less dangerous on a moral account."

Elsewhere the same critic has observed that, "in the *Venus and Adonis*, the first and most obvious excellence is the perfect sweetness of the versification; its adaptation to the subject; and the power displayed in varying the march of the words without passing into a loftier and more majestic rhythm than was demanded by the thoughts, or permitted by the propriety of preserving a sense of melody predominant." This self-controlling power of "varying the march of the words without passing into a loftier and more majestic rhythm" is perhaps one of the most signal instances of Shakespeare's consummate mastery of his art, even as a very young man.

Dowden says of the *Venus and Adonis* and the *Lucrece*: "Each is an artistic study; and they form companion studies—one of female lust and boyish coldness, the other of male lust and womanly chastity. Coleridge noticed 'the utter aloofness of the poet's own feelings from those of which he is at once the painter and the analyst;' but it can

hardly be admitted that this aloofness of the poet's own feelings proceeds from a dramatic abandonment of self. The subjects of these two poems did not call and choose their poet; they did not possess him and compel him to render them into art. Rather the poet expressly made choice of the subjects, and deliberately set himself down before each to accomplish an exhaustive study of it. . . . And for a young writer of the Renascence, the subject of Shakspeare's earliest poem was a splendid one — as voluptuous and unspiritual as that of a classical picture of Titian. It included two figures containing inexhaustible pasture for the fleshly eye, and delicacies and dainties for the sensuous imagination of the Renascence — the enamoured Queen of Beauty, and the beautiful, disdainful boy. It afforded occasion for endless exercises and variations on the themes, Beauty, Lust, and Death. In holding the subject before his imagination, Shakspeare is perfectly cool and collected. He has made \* choice of the subject, and he is interested in doing his duty by it in the most thorough way a young poet can; -but he remains unimpassioned — intent wholly upon getting down the right colours and lines upon his canvas."

Furnivall says: "From whatever source came the impulse to take from Ovid the heated story of the heathen goddess's lust, we cannot forbear noticing how through this stifling atmosphere Shakspeare has blown the fresh breezes of English meads

and downs. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* itself is not fuller of evidence of Shakspeare's intimate knowledge of, and intense delight in, country scenes and sights, whether shown in his description of horse and hounds, or in closer touches, like that of the hush of wind before the rain; while such lines as those about the eagle flapping, 'shaking its wings' over its food, send us still to the Zoological Gardens to verify. Two lines there are, reflecting Shakspeare's own experience of life — his own early life in London possibly — which we must not fail to note; they are echoed in *Hamlet*: —

' For misery is trodden on by many,  
And being low, never relieved by any.'

'Twas a lesson plainly taught by the Elizabethan days, and the Victorian preach it too. It has been the fashion lately to run down the *Venus* as compared with Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*. Its faults are manifest. It shows less restraint and training than the work of the earlier-ripened Marlowe; but to me it has a fulness of power and promise of genius enough to make three Marlowes. . . . Of possession and promise in Shakspeare's first poem, we have an intense love of nature, and a conviction (which never left him) of her sympathy with the moods of men; a penetrating eye; a passionate soul; a striking power of throwing himself into all he sees, and reproducing it living and real to his reader; a lively fancy, command of words, and

music of verse; these wielded by a shaping spirit that strives to keep each faculty under one control, and guide it while doing its share of the desired whole."

Mr. George Wyndham, in his *Poems of Shakespeare*, is right in declaring that Shakespeare handles his theme with due regard for beauty and "disregard for all that disfigures beauty," and, like Coleridge, defends the poem from the charge of immorality. He says: "Shakespeare portrays an amorous encounter through its every gesture; yet, unless in some dozen lines where he glances aside, like any Mediæval, at a gaiety not yet divorced from love, his appeal to Beauty persists from first to last; and nowhere is there an appeal to Lust. The laughter and sorrow of the poem belong wholly to the faery world of vision and romance, where there is no sickness, whether of sentiment or of sense. And both are rendered by images, clean-cut as in antique gems, brilliantly enamelled as in mediæval chalices, numerous and interwoven as in Moorish arabesques; so that their incision, colour, and rapidity of development, apart even from the intricate melodies of the verbal medium in which they live, tax the faculty of artistic appreciation to a point where it begins to participate in the asceticism of artistic creation. 'As little can a mind thus roused and awakened be brooded on by mean and indistinct emotion as the low, lazy mist can creep upon the surface of a lake while a



strong gale is driving it onward in waves and billows:— Thus does Coleridge resist the application to shift the venue of criticism on this poem from the court of Beauty to the court of Morals, and upon that subject little more can be said. How wilful it is to discuss the moral bearing of an invitation couched by an imaginary goddess in such imaginative terms as these:—

‘ Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear,  
Or, like a fairy, trip upon the green,  
Or, like a nymph, with long dishevell'd hair,  
Dance on the sands, and yet no footing seen !’ . . .

“ When Venus says, ‘ Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear,’ she instances yet another peculiar excellence of Shakespeare’s lyrical art, which shows in this poem, is redoubled in *Lucrece*, and in the *Sonnets* yields the most perfect examples of human speech:—

‘ Touch but my lips with those fair lips of thine,  
Though mine be not so fair, yet are they red. . . .  
Art thou ashamed to kiss? Then wink again,  
And I will wink; so shall the day seem night.’

These are the fair words of her soliciting, and Adonis’s reply is of the same silvery quality:—

‘ If love have lent you twenty thousand tongues,  
And every tongue more moving than your own,  
Bewitching like the wanton mermaid’s songs,  
Yet from mine ear the tempting tune is blown.’

And, as he goes on : —

‘Lest the deceiving harmony should run  
Into the quiet closure of my breast ;’

you catch a note prelusive to the pleading altercation of the *Sonnets*. It is the discourse in *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* which renders them discursive. Indeed they are long poems, on whose first reading Poe’s advice, never to begin at the same place, may wisely be followed. You do well, for instance, to begin at stanza 136 —

[‘ With this, he breaketh from the sweet embrace  
Of those fair arms which bound him to her breast,  
And homeward through the dark laund runs apace,  
Leaves Love upon her back deeply distress’d.  
Look, how a bright star shooteth from the sky,  
So glides he in the night from Venus’ eye.’] —

in order to enjoy the narrative of Venus’s vain pursuit, with your senses unwearied by the length and sweetness of her argument. The passage hence to the end is in the true romantic tradition: stanzas 140 and 141 —

[‘ She marking them begins a wailing note  
And sings extemporally a woeful ditty :  
How love makes young men thrall and old men dote ;  
How love is wise in folly, foolish-witty.  
Her heavy anthem still concludes in woe,  
And still the choir of echoes answer so.

Her song was tedious and outwore the night,  
 For lovers' hours are long, though seeming short;  
 If pleased themselves, others, they think, delight  
 In such-like circumstance, with such-like sport;  
     Their copious stories oftentimes begun  
     End without audience and are never done.']—

are as clearly forerunners of Keats as 144 —

['Venus salutes him with this fair good-morrow:  
 "O thou clear god, and patron of all light,  
 From whom each lamp and shining star doth borrow  
 The beauteous influence that makes him bright,  
     There lives a son that suck'd an earthly mother,  
     May lend thee light, as thou dost lend to other."']—

is the child of Chaucer. The truth of such art consists in magnifying selected details until their gigantic shapes, edged with a shadowy iridescence, fill the whole field of observation. Certain gestures of the body, certain moods of the mind, are made to tell with the weight of trifles during awe-stricken pauses of delay."

The three sonnets on the story of Venus and Adonis in *The Passionate Pilgrim* are generally regarded by the critics as preliminary studies for the poem; but it is doubtful whether Shakespeare wrote them. If they are his it is singular that they were not included in the 1609 edition of the *Sonnets* with the two sonnets (153, 154) on the same subject. Their authenticity may also be questioned from the fact that in one of them the author

ridicules Adonis ("He rose and ran away — ah, fool too froward!") for not yielding to the wiles of Venus. In Shakespeare's poem it is to be noted that nothing like this occurs. In the line (578), "The poor fool prays her that he may depart," the context proves that "fool" is used in a sympathetic pitying way; as "poor fool" is in at least eight passages in the plays — so also "good fool" and "pretty fool." The behaviour of Adonis is indirectly approved by the poet, while that of Venus is, again and again, directly condemned; as, for instance, in lines 555–558: —

"Her face doth reek and smoke, her blood doth boil,  
And careless lust stirs up a desperate courage;  
Planting oblivion, beating reason back,  
Forgetting shame's pure blush and honour's wrack."

Adonis himself is eloquent in his denunciations of her sensuality and her sophistry (787 fol.), and Shakespeare speaks through him as truly as in the 129th sonnet: —

"What have you urged that I cannot reprove?  
The path is smooth that leadeth on to danger:  
I hate not love, but your device in love,  
That lends embracements unto every stranger.  
You do it for increase; O strange excuse,  
When reason is the bawd to lust's abuse!

Call it not love, for Love to heaven is fled,  
Since sweating Lust on earth usurp'd his name;

Under whose simple semblance he hath fed  
Upon fresh beauty, blotting it with blame ;  
Which the hot tyrant stains and soon bereaves,  
As caterpillars do the tender leaves.

‘Love comforteth like sunshine after rain,  
But Lust’s effect is tempest after sun ;  
Love’s gentle spring doth always fresh remain,  
Lust’s winter comes ere summer half be done ;  
Love surfeits not, Lust like a glutton dies ;  
Love is all truth, Lust full of forged lies.’”

It is significant, moreover, that the goddess is not successful in her lustful wooing, as other authors (except Ovid) represent, bringing Adonis back from Hades to be with her.

That the poem was considered somewhat objectionable even in Shakespeare’s day is evident from certain contemporaneous references to it. Halliwell-Phillipps quotes *A Mad World my Masters*, 1608: “I have convay’d away all her wanton pamphlets, as Hero and Leander, Venus and Adonis;” and John Davies, who in his *Papers Complaint* (found in his *Scourge of Folly*, 1610) makes “Paper” admit the superlative excellence of Shakespeare’s poem, but at the same time censure its being “attired in such bawdy geare.” It is also stated that “the coyest dames in private read it for their closset-games.” In *The Dumble Knight*, 1608, the lawyer’s clerk refers to it as “maides philosophie;” and the stanza beginning with line 229 (“Fond-

ling,' she saith, 'since I have hemm'd thee here,'” etc.) is quoted both in that play and in Heywood's *Fayre Mayd of the Exchange*, 1607.

The main incidents of the *Lucrece* were doubtless familiar to Shakespeare from his school-days; and they had been used again and again in poetry and prose: in Latin by Ovid, Dionysius Halicarnassus, Diodorus Siculus, Dio Cassius, and Valerius Maximus; and in English by Chaucer (in his *Legende of Goode Women*), by Lydgate (*Falles of Princes*), and by Paynter (*Palace of Pleasure*), to say nothing of “balletts” on the subject entered in the Stationers' Registers in 1568, 1570, and 1576.

The greater maturity shown in the poem, though published only a year after *Venus and Adonis*, certainly tends to support the theory that the latter was largely written some years before its publication, though probably not completed until 1592. Knight, indeed, goes so far as to say: “There is to our mind the difference of eight or even ten years in the aspect of these poems—a difference as manifest as that which exists between *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Romeo and Juliet*.” Coleridge remarks: “The *Venus and Adonis* did not perhaps allow the display of the deeper passions. But the story of Lucretia seems to favour, and even demand, their intensest workings. And yet we find in *Shakespeare's* management of the tale neither pathos nor any other *dramatic* quality. There is the same minute and faithful imagery as in the former poem,

in the same vivid colours, inspirited by the same impetuous vigour of thought, and diverging and contracting with the same activity of the assimilative and of the modifying faculties; and with a yet larger display, a yet wider range of knowledge and reflection; and, lastly, with the same perfect dominion, often *domination*, over the whole world of language."

Baynes, in his comments on "the profounder ethical and reflective aspects" of the two poems, observes: "It may justly be said that if Shakespeare follows Ovid in the narrative and descriptive part of his work, in the vivid picturing of sensuous passion, he is as decisively separated from him in the reflective part, the higher purpose and ethical significance of the poems. The underlying subject in both is the same, the debasing nature and destructive results of the violent sensuous impulses, which in antiquity so often usurped the name of love, although in truth they have little in common with the nobler passion. The influence of fierce inordinate desire is dealt with by Shakespeare in these poems in all its breadth as affecting both sexes, and in all its intensity as blasting the most sacred interests and relationships of life. In working out the subject, Shakespeare shows his thorough knowledge of its seductive outward charm, of the arts and artifices, the persuasions and assaults, the raptures and languors of stimulated sensual passion. In this he is quite a match for the erotic

and elegiac poets of classic times, and especially of Roman literature. He is not likely therefore in any way to undervalue the attraction or the power of what they celebrate in strains so fervid and rapturous. But, while contemplating the lower passion steadily in all its force and charm, he has at the same time the higher vision which enables him to see through and beyond it, the reflective insight to measure its results, and to estimate with remorseless accuracy its true worth. It is in this higher power of reflective insight, in depth and vigour of thought as well as feeling, that Shakespeare's earliest efforts are marked off even from the better works of those whom he took, if not as his masters, at least as his models and guides. He was himself full of rich and vigorous life, deepened by sensibilities of the rarest strength and delicacy; and in early youth had realized, in his own experience, the impetuous force of passionate impulses. But his intellectual power no less than the essential depth and purity of his nobler emotional nature would effectually prevent his ever becoming 'soft fancy's slave.'

"In the very earliest poem we have from Shakespeare's pen this higher note of the modern world is clearly sounded — the note that 'Love is Lord of all,' and that love is something infinitely higher and more divine than the lawless vagrant passion which in pagan times passed under that name. To the modern mind, while the latter is blind, selfish, and



often brutal in proportion to its strength, the former is full of sympathy and self-abnegation, of an almost sacred ardour and gentleness, humility and devotion, the very heart and crown of life."

Further on, after quoting the stanzas (787 fol.) given above, in which Adonis reproaches Venus for her sensuality, Baynes remarks: "In this reproof of the pagan goddess of love, the higher note of the modern world is struck fully and clearly. It is repeated with tragic emphasis in the *Lucrece*, deepened in the *Sonnets*, and developed through all the gracious range of higher female characters in the dramas. Nowhere indeed is the vital difference in the social axes of the ancient and modern world more vividly seen, than in the contrast between the Lesbians, Delias, and Corinnas of Roman poetry, and the Mirandas, Portias, and Imogens of Shakespeare's dramas. In the one we have the monotonous ardours and disdains, the gusts and glooms, the tricks and artifices belonging to the stunted life of lower impulse; in the other, the fadeless beauty and grace, the vivacity and intelligence, the gentleness and truth of perfect womanhood."

Aside from *Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece*, and the *Sonnets* (which will be discussed in another chapter), the only poems ascribed to Shakespeare which are quite certainly his are *A Lover's Complaint* and *The Phoenix and the Turtle*.

*A Lover's Complaint* was first published with the *Sonnets* in 1609. There is no external evidence for

determining when it was written, but the internal evidence of style and treatment indicates that it was later than *Lucrece*. It is in the same seven-lined stanza as that poem, and shows a "marked decrease in the use of antithesis and verbal paradox, and so far points to a refinement in taste;" but there is nothing in the treatment of the subject — the lament of a girl who has been betrayed by a deceitful youth — which shows any noteworthy advance in other respects. The Spenserian flavour of the poem has been often noted by the critics. Malone remarks that it reads like a challenge to Spenser on his own ground. As Mr. Verity observes ("Henry Irving" edition of *Shakespeare*), "it has much of Spenser's stately pathos and sense of physical beauty, and exquisite verbal melody." It appears to be an early exercise in the style of that poet, whose *Complaints: containing Sundry Small Poems of the World's Vanity* was published in 1591. These opening lines of *The Ruins of Time* in that volume have been compared with those of *A Lover's Complaint*: —

"A woman sitting sorrowfully wailing,  
 Rending her yellow locks like wiry gold,  
 About her shoulders carelessly down trailing,  
 And streams of tears from her fair eyes forth railing;  
 In her right hand a broken rod she held,  
 Which towards heaven she seemed on high to weld."

*The Phoenix and the Turtle* must have been written before 1601, when it was printed with Chester's

*Love's Martyr* and ascribed to Shakespeare. The title-page of the book, after referring at some length to that poem and "the true legend of famous King *Arthur*," which follows it, continues thus:—

"To these are added some new compositions of severall moderne Writers whose names are subscribed to their seuerall workes, vpon the first subject: viz. the *Phœnix and Turtle*."

The part of the book containing these "compositions" has a separate title-page, as follows:—

"HEREAFTER FOLLOVV DIVERSE Poeticall Essaies on the former Subject; viz: the *Turtle and Phœnix*. Done by the best and chieftest of our moderne writers, with their names subscribed to their particular workes: neuer before extant. And (now first) consecrated by them all generally, to the loue and merite of the true-noble Knight, Sir Iohn Salisburie. *Dignum laude virum Musa vetat mori*. [wood-cut of anchor] *Anchora Spei*. MDCI."

Among these poems are some by Marston, Chapman, and Ben Jonson.

Malone had no doubt of the genuineness of *The Phœnix and the Turtle*, but a few of the recent critics have been less confident of its authorship. Grant White says: "There is no other external evidence that these verses are Shakespeare's than their appearance with his signature in a collection of poems published in London while he was living there in the height of his reputation. The style, however, is at least a happy imitation of his, espe-

cially in the bold and original use of epithet." Dowden, in his *Primer* (1878), says: "That it is his seems in a high degree doubtful;" but, some years later, in a letter to the present writer, he said that he had no longer any doubt that the poem is Shakespeare's.

There is one point in favour of this view which apparently has been overlooked by the critics; namely, that Chester's book was not a publisher's piratical venture, like *The Passionate Pilgrim*, but the reputable work of a gentleman who would hardly have ventured to insult his patron to whom he dedicates it, by palming off anonymous verses as the contribution of a well-known poet of the time, who was residing in London in 1601 when it appeared.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, in the preface to his *Parnassus* (1875) remarks: "I should like to have the Academy of Letters propose a prize for an essay on Shakespeare's poem, *Let the bird of loudest lay*, and the *Threnos* with which it closes, the aim of the essay being to explain, by a historical research into the poetic myths and tendencies of the age in which it was written, the frame and allusions of the poem. I have not seen Chester's *Love's Martyr* and 'the Additional Poems' (1601), in which it appeared. Perhaps that book will suggest all the explanation this poem requires. To unassisted readers, it would appear to be a lament on the death of a poet, and of his poetic mistress. But the poem is so quaint, and

charming in diction, tone, and allusions, and in its perfect metre and harmony, that I would gladly have the fullest illustration yet attainable. I consider this piece a good example of the rule that there is a poetry for bards proper, as well as a poetry for the world of readers. This poem, if published for the first time, and without a known author's name, would find no general reception. Only the poets would save it."

Halliwell-Phillipps says: "It was towards the close of the present year, 1600, or at some time in the following one, that Shakespeare, for the first and only time, came forward in the avowed character of a philosophical writer." After giving an account of Chester's book, he adds: "The contribution of the great dramatist is a remarkable poem in which he makes a notice of the obsequies of the phoenix and turtle-dove subservient to the delineation of spiritual union. It is generally thought that Chester himself intended a personal allegory, but, if that be the case, there is nothing to indicate that Shakespeare participated in the design, nor even that he had endured the punishment of reading *Love's Martyr*."

All the other poems included in the standard editions of Shakespeare's works are from *The Passionate Pilgrim*, which was first printed in 1599, with the following title-page:—

"THE PASSIONATE PILGRIME. By W. Shakespeare. At London Printed for W. Iaggard, and are

to be sold by W. Leake, at the Greyhound in Paules Churchyard. 1599.”

In the middle of sheet C is a second title:—

“SONNETS To sundry notes of Musicke. *At London* Printed for W. Iaggard, and are to be sold by W. Leake, at the Greyhound in Paules Churchyard. 1599.”

The book was reprinted in 1612, together with some poems by Thomas Heywood, the whole being attributed to Shakespeare. The title at first stood thus:—

“THE PASSIONATE PILGRIME. OF *Certaine Amorous Sonnets*, betweene Venus and Adonis, *newly corrected and augmented*. By *W. Shakespere*. The third Edition. Whereunto is newly added two Loue-Epistles, the first from *Paris to Hellen*, and *Hellens* answere backe againe to *Paris*. Printed by W. Iaggard. 1612.”

The Bodleian copy of this edition contains the following note by Malone: “All the poems from Sig. D. 5 were written by Thomas Heywood, who was so offended at Jaggard for printing them under the name of Shakespeare that he has added a post-script to his *Apology for Actors*, 4to, 1612, on this subject; and Jaggard in consequence of it appears to have printed a new title-page to please Heywood, without the name of Shakespeare in it. The former title-page was no doubt intended to be cancelled, but by some inadvertence they were both prefixed to this copy and I have retained them as a curios-

ity." The corrected title-page is substantially as above, omitting "By W. Shakespere."

It will be observed that this is called the *third* edition; but no other between 1599 and 1612 is known to exist.

The book contained five poems that are known to be Shakespeare's: Sonnets 138 and 144; Longaville's sonnet in *Love's Labour's Lost* (iv. 3. 60 fol.); "If love make me forsworn," etc. (iv. 2. 109 fol.); and "On a day — alack the day!" etc. (iv. 3. 101 fol.) in the same play. Of the three sonnets on Venus and Adonis (see page 207 above), one ("Venus, with young Adonis," etc.) was probably by Bartholomew Griffin, in whose *Fidessa more Chaste than Kinde* it had appeared in 1596. It is improbable that the others are Shakespeare's. Several other poems in the book have been traced to their authors; and among the rest there are none that can have been written by Shakespeare.

Swinburne, in his *Study of Shakespeare*, remarks: "What Coleridge said of Ben Jonson's epithet for 'turtle-footed peace,' we may say of the label affixed to this rag-picker's bag of stolen goods: *The Passionate Pilgrim* is a pretty title, a very pretty title; pray, what may it mean? In all the larcenous little bundle of verse there is neither a poem which bears that name nor a poem by which that name would be bearable. The publisher of the booklet was like 'one Ragozine, a most notorious pirate;' and the method no less than the motive of his rascality in

the present instance is palpable and simple enough. Fired by the immediate and instantly proverbial popularity of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, he hired, we may suppose, some ready hack of unclean hand to supply him with three doggrel sonnets on the same subject, noticeable only for the porcine quality of prurience; he procured by some means a rough copy or an incorrect transcript of two genuine and unpublished sonnets by Shakespeare, which with the acute instinct of a felonious tradesman he laid atop of his worthless wares by way of gilding to their base metal; he stole from the two years published text of *Love's Labour's Lost*, and reproduced, with more or less mutilation or corruption, the sonnet of Longaville, the 'canzonet' of Biron, and the far lovelier love-song of Dumain. The rest of the ragman's gatherings, with three most notable exceptions, is little better for the most part than dry rubbish or disgusting refuse; unless a plea may haply be put in for the pretty commonplaces of the lines on a 'sweet rose, fair flower,' and so forth; for the couple of thin and pallid if tender and tolerable copies of verse on 'Beauty' and 'Good Night,' or the passably light and lively stray of song on 'crabbed age and youth.' I need not say that those three exceptions are the stolen and garbled work of Marlowe and of Barnfield, our elder Shelley and our first-born Keats: the singer of Cynthia in verse well worthy of Endymion, who would seem to have died as a poet in the same fatal year of his age that



Keats died as a man; the first adequate English laureate of the nightingale, to be supplanted or equalled by none until the advent of his mightier brother."

In 1640 a volume was published with the following title:—

"POEMS: Written by Wil. Shakespeare. Gent. Printed at London by Tho. Cotes, and are to be sold by Iohn Benson, dwelling in S<sup>t</sup>. Dunstons Church-yard. 1640."

It contains the *Sonnets* (with the exception of eight); *The Passionate Pilgrim* (all the poems, not merely "some," as both the first and the revised "Cambridge" editions state; or "the greater part," as Knight and others give it); *The Phoenix and the Turtle*; the lines, "Why should this a desert be," etc. (*As You Like It*, iii. 2. 133 fol.); "Take, O take those lips away" (*Measure for Measure*, iv. 1. 1 fol.); and *A Lover's Complaint*; with some translations from Ovid and other pieces, all falsely ascribed to Shakespeare. *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* are not included in the volume.

The first complete edition of Shakespeare's Poems, including the *Sonnets*, was issued (according to Lowndes, *Bibliographer's Manual*) in 1709, with the following title:—

"A Collection of Poems, in Two Volumes; Being all the Miscellanies of Mr. William Shakespeare, which were Publish'd by himself in the Year 1609, and now correctly Printed from those Editions. The

First Volume contains, I. VENUS AND ADONIS. II. The Rape of LUCRECE. III. The Passionate Pilgrim. IV. Some Sonnets set to sundry Notes of Musick. The Second Volume contains One Hundred and Fifty Four Sonnets, all of them in Praise of his Mistress. II. A Lover's Complaint of his Angry Mistress. LONDON: Printed for *Bernard Lintott*, at the *Cross-Keys*, between the Two Temple-Gates in *Fleet-street*."

The editor of this collection evidently did not know that most of the *Sonnets* were addressed to a man, and that the "lover" of *A Lover's Complaint* was a woman.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE PERIOD OF THE ENGLISH HISTORICAL PLAYS

*King John*, though first printed in the folio of 1623, was written, as internal evidence indicates, at about the same time as *Richard II.*; and it is probable that it followed rather than preceded that play. We cannot be far wrong if, with Furnivall, we assign it to the year 1595. Dowden also says: "The chief point of difference with respect to form is that *Richard II.* contains a much larger proportion of rhymed verse, and on the whole we shall not perhaps err in regarding *Richard II.* as the earlier of the two." Fleay makes the date 1596, seeing in ii. 1. 66-75, as others have done, an allusion to the fleet sent against Spain in that year: —

" And all the unsettled humours of the land,  
Rash, inconsiderate, fiery voluntaries,  
With ladies' faces and fierce dragons' spleens,  
Have sold their fortunes at their native homes,  
Bearing their birthrights proudly on their backs,  
To make a hazard of new fortunes here.  
In brief, a braver choice of dauntless spirits  
Than now the English bottoms have waft o'er

Did never float upon the swelling tide,  
To do offence and scath in Christendom."

He believes also that "the laments of Constance for Arthur's death (iii. 4) were inspired by Shakespeare's sorrow for his heir and only son, Hamnet, whom he lost August 12, 1596."

*King John* varies from the facts of history more than any other play of the English series, being founded upon an earlier drama published in 1591 with the following title-page:—

"THE | Troublesome Raigne | of *Iohn* King of  
*England*, with the dis- | couerie of *King* Richard  
Cordelions | Base sonne (vulgarly named, The  
Ba- | stard Fawconbridge): also the | death of *King*  
*Iohn* at *Swinstead* | *Abbey*. | As it was (*sundry times*)  
*publikely acted by the* | *Queenes Maiesties Players, in*  
*the ho- | nourable Citie of* | *London*. Imprinted at  
*London for Sampson Clarke,* | *and are to be solde at*  
*his shop, on the backe- | side of the Royall Exchange.*  
| 1591."

In 1611 this play was reprinted with "Written by W. Sh." added to the title-page; and in a third edition, brought out in 1622, it was ascribed to "W. Shakespeare." This was doubtless a mere trick of the publishers to help the sale of the book, as the style proves conclusively that Shakespeare had no part in its authorship.

While the poet follows this old play in the outlines of his plot, and occasionally borrows its lan-



*Leipzig, 1871, by A. W. Allen & Co. London*



guage, his real indebtedness to it is comparatively slight. The main incidents are the same, but the characters are almost re-created. "Artistically considered, Shakespeare took in the outward design of the piece, blended both parts into one, adhered to the leading features of the characters, and finished them with finer touches."

Furnivall remarks: "Shakspere alters the old play . . . in order to bring it closer home to his hearers and the circumstances of the time,—the disputed succession of Elizabeth, and the interference of Spain and the Pope. The old play-writer made the murder of Arthur the turning-point between the high-spirited success of John at first and his dejection and disgrace at last; and he, too, fixed on the assertion of national independence against invading Frenchmen and encroaching ecclesiastics as the true principle of dramatic action of John's time. So long as John is the impersonator of England, of defiance to the foreigner, and opposition to the Pope, so long is he a hero. . . . His death, ought, of course, dramatically to have followed from some act of his in the play, as revenge for the murder of Arthur, or his plundering the abbots or abbeys, or opposing the Pope. The author of *The Troublesome Raigne*, with a true instinct, made a monk murder John out of revenge for his anti-papal patriotism. But Shakspere, unfortunately, set this story aside, though there was some warrant for it in Holinshed, and thus left a serious

blot on his drama which it is impossible to remove. The character which to me stands foremost in *John* is Constance, with that most touching expression of grief for the son she had lost. Beside her cry, the tender pleading of Arthur for his life is heard, and both are backed by the rough voice of Falconbridge, who, Englishman-like, depreciates his own motives at first, but is lifted by patriotism into a gallant soldier, while his deep moral nature shows itself in his heartfelt indignation at Arthur's supposed murder. The rhetoric of the earlier historical plays is kept up in *King John*, and also Shakspeare's power of creating situations, which he had possessed from the first."

*The Merchant of Venice* may have been Shakespeare's next play. It has been dated as early as 1594 and as late as 1598, but 1596 or 1597 seems more probable. It was entered for publication on the Stationers' Registers thus:—

"22 July, 1598, James Robertes.] A booke of the Marchaunt of Venyce, or otherwise called the Jewe of Venyse. Provided that yt bee not prynted by the said James Robertes, or anye other whatsoever, without lycence first had from the right honourable the Lord Chamberlen."

The company of players to which Shakespeare belonged, and for which he wrote, were "the Lord Chamberlain's Servants;" and the above order was meant to prohibit the publication of the play until the patron of the company should give his permis-



sion. This he appears not to have done until two years later, when the following entry was made in the Register:—

“28 Oct., 1600, Tho. Haies.] The booke of the Merchant of Venyce.”

Soon after this entry, or before the end of 1600, the play was published by Haies (or Heyes); and another edition was brought out by Roberts in the same year. The play, so far as known, was not printed again until it appeared in the folio of 1623.

Henslowe's *Diary*, under the date “25 of aguste, 1594,” records the performance of “the Venesyon comodey,” which is marked *ne*, as a new play. Some critics take this to be *The Merchant of Venice*, as Shakespeare belonged to the company then acting in the theatre of which Henslowe was chief manager; but the play shows a decided advance on any of the other work assigned to that period, which, moreover, as we have seen, includes so much other work of Shakespeare's, dramatic and poetical, that nothing more can in reason be added to it. Sidney Lee assumes that the “Venesyon comodey” “was probably the earliest version of *The Merchant of Venice*,” and that “it was revised later;” but there is not the slightest internal evidence that the play was ever revised.

The main plot of the drama is composed of two distinct stories: that of the bond, and that of the caskets. Both are found in the *Gesta Romanorum*, which had been translated into English as early as

the time of Henry VI. Shakespeare, however, appears to have been indebted, directly or indirectly, for the incidents connected with the bond to a story in *Il Pecorone*, a collection of tales by Giovanni Fiorentino, first published at Milan in 1558, though written nearly two centuries earlier. In this story we have a rich lady at *Belmont*, who is to be won on certain conditions; and she is finally the prize of a young merchant, whose friend, having become surety for him to a Jew under the same penalty as in the play, is rescued from the forfeiture by the adroitness of the married lady, who is disguised as a lawyer. The pretended judge receives, as in the comedy, her marriage ring as a gratuity, and afterwards banter her husband, in the same way, upon the loss of it. An English translation of the book was extant in Shakespeare's time.

It is probable, however, that the legends of the bond and the caskets had been blended in dramatic form before Shakespeare began to write for the stage. Stephen Gosson, a Puritan author, in his *Schoole of Abuse*, published in 1579, excepts a few plays from the sweeping condemnation of his "pleasant ineffectiue against Poets, Pipers, Plaiers, Jest-ers, and such-like caterpillers of a Commonwelth." Among these exceptions he mentions "*The Jew*, and Ptolome, showne at the Bull; the one representing *the greedinesse of worldly chusers*, and *the bloody minds of usurers*; the other very lively describing howe seditious estates with their owne devises, false

friends with their owne swords, and rebellious commons in their owne snares, are overthrowe." We have no other knowledge of this play of *The Jew*; but the nationality of its hero and the double moral, agreeing so exactly with that of *The Merchant of Venice*, render it probable that the plots of the two dramas were essentially the same, and that Shakespeare in this instance, as in others, worked upon some rough model already prepared for him.

Be this as it may, Shakespeare's indebtedness to his predecessors, as in all similar instances, is insignificant. The characters, the poetry, the sentiment — everything that makes the play what it is — are his, and his alone. As Grant White remarks, "the people are puppets, and the incidents are all in these old stories. They are mere bundles of barren sticks that the poet's touch causes to bloom like Aaron's rod: they are heaps of dry bones till he clothes them with human flesh and breathes into them the breath of life. *Antonio*, grave, pensive, prudent save in his devotion to his young kinsman, as a Christian hating the Jew, as a royal merchant despising the usurer; *Bassanio*, lavish yet provident, a generous gentleman although a fortune-seeker, wise although a gay gallant, and manly though dependent; *Gratiano*, who unites the not too common virtues of thorough good nature and unselfishness with the sometimes not unserviceable fault of talking for talk's sake; *Shylock*, crafty and cruel, whose revenge is as mean as it is fierce and

furious, whose abuse never rises to invective, and who has yet some dignity of port as the avenger of a nation's wrongs, some claim upon our sympathy as a father outraged by his only child; and *Portia*, matchless impersonation of that rare woman who is gifted even more in intellect than loveliness, and who yet stops gracefully short of the offence of intellectuality — these, not to notice minor characters no less perfectly organized or completely developed after their kind — these, and the poetry which is their atmosphere, and through which they beam upon us, all radiant in its golden light, are Shakespeare's only; and these it is, and not the incidents of old and, but for these, forgotten tales, that make *The Merchant of Venice* a priceless and imperishable dower to the queenly city that sits enthroned upon the sea — a dower of romance more bewitching than that of her moonlit waters and beauty-laden balconies, of adornment more splendid than that of her pictured palaces, of human interest more enduring than that of her blood-stained annals, more touching even than the sight of her faded grandeur."

The *First Part of King Henry the Fourth* was probably written at about the same time as *The Merchant of Venice*; or, as the editors almost unanimously decide, in 1596 or 1597. It was entered on the Stationers' Registers on the 25th of February, 1597-8 as "a booke intituled The historie of Henry the iiiij<sup>th</sup> with his battaile of Shrewsburye

against Henry Hottspurre of the Northe with the conceived mirthe of Sir John ffalstoff;" and a quarto edition was printed in 1598. A second quarto was brought out in 1599, followed by others in 1604, 1608, and 1613. Each of these appears to have been printed from its predecessor; and a partially corrected copy of the last in the series seems to have furnished the text of the play for the folio of 1623. Subsequent editions in quarto were printed in 1622 (probably too late for the folio editors), 1632, and 1639.

The historical materials of the play, as of *2 Henry IV.* and *Henry V.*, were drawn from Holinshed's *Chronicles* and from the old play of *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*. A Sir John Oldcastle appears in the latter as one of Prince Henry's wild companions. That the poet adopted the name is evident from allusions of subsequent writers, from the circumstance that in the first (1600) quarto edition of *2 Henry IV.* the prefix "*Old.*" is found before one of Falstaff's speeches, and from Henry's calling the knight "my old lad of the castle" (i. 2. 38). In *2 Henry IV.* (iii. 2. 28), moreover, Falstaff is said to have been "page to Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk," which the historical Oldcastle actually was. This Oldcastle is better known as Lord Cobham, the Lollard martyr. Shakespeare changed the name because he did not wish to offend the Protestants nor to please the Roman Catholics. He refers to the alteration in the epilogue to

2 *Henry IV.* where, after intimating that he may bring Falstaff on the stage again, where he "shall die of a sweat," he adds: "for Oldecastle died a martyr, and this is not the man."

In the *Palladis Tamia*, or *Wits Treasury*, by Francis Meres, published in 1598, 1 *Henry IV.* is one of twelve plays of Shakespeare enumerated in a famous passage which may be appropriately quoted here:—

"As the Greeke tongue is made famous and eloquent by *Homer, Hesiod, Euripedes, Aeschilus, Sophocles, Pindarus, Phocylides* and *Aristophanes*; and the Latine tongue by *Virgil, Ouid, Horace, Silius Italicus, Lucanus, Lucretius, Ausonius* and *Claudianus*: so the English tongue is mightily enriched, and gorgeously inuested in rare ornaments and resplendent abiliments by sir *Philip Sidney, Spencer, Daniel, Drayton, Warner, Shakespeare, Marlow* and *Chapman*.

"As the soule of *Euphorbus* was thought to live in *Pythagoras*: so the sweete wittie soule of *Ouid* lives in mellifluous & hony-tongued *Shakespeare*, witnes his *Venus* and *Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugred Sonnets among his priuate friends, &c.

"As *Plautus* and *Seneca* are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latines: so *Shakespeare* among y<sup>e</sup> English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for Comedy, witnes his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Loue labours lost*, his *Loue labours wonne*, his *Midsummers night*

*dreame*, and his *Merchant of Venice*: for Tragedy his *Richard the 2.* *Richard the 3.* *Henry the 4.* *King Iohn*, *Titus Andronicus* and his *Romeo and Iuliet*.

“As *Epius Stolo* said, that the Muses would speake with *Plautus* tongue, if they would speak Latin: so I say that the Muses would speak with *Shakespeares* fine filed phrase, if they would speake English.

“And as *Horace* saith of his: *Exegi monumentum ære perennius; Regaliq: situ pyramidum altius; Quod non imber edax; Non Aquilo impotens possit diruere; aut innumerabilis annorum series & fuga temporum*: so say I seuerally of sir *Philip Sidneyes*, *Spencers*, *Daniels*, *Draytons*, *Shakespeares*, and *Warners workes*; . . .

“As *Pindarus*, *Anacreon* and *Callimachus* among the Greeks; and *Horace* and *Catullus* among the Latines are the best Lyrick Poets; so in this faculty the best amog our Poets are *Spencer* (who excelleth in all kinds) *Daniel*, *Drayton*, *Shakespeare*, *Bretton*. . .

“As these Tragicke Poets flourished in Greece, *Aeschylus*, *Euripedes*, *Sophocles*, *Alexander Aetolus*, *Achæus Erithriceus*, *Astydamas Atheniensis*, *Apollo-dorus Tarsensis*, *Nicomachus Phrygius*, *Thespis Atticus*, and *Timon Appoloniates*; and these among the Latines, *Accius*, *M. Attilius*, *Pomponius Secundus* and *Seneca*: so these are our best for Tragedie, the Lorde *Buckhurst*, Doctor *Leg* of Cambridge, Doctor *Edes* of Oxforde, maister *Edward Ferris*, the Authour of the *Mirroure for Magistrates*, *Marlow*,

*Peele, Watson, Kid, Shakespeare, Drayton, Chapman, Decker, and Benjamin Iohnson.*"

Of this play, and the others in the series, Verplanck remarks: "With all sorts of readers and spectators this is the greatest favourite of the whole of Shakespeare's English histories, and, indeed, is perhaps the most popular of all dramatic compositions in the language. The popularity of this play has extended itself to the other histories with which it is connected, until it has made them all nearly as familiarly known as itself. It is probably owing quite as much to Falstaff and to Hotspur as to the several merits of the other histories — great as they are, though in very different degrees — that this whole dramatic series of histories have been mixed up with all our recollections and impressions of the Wars of York and Lancaster, and finally become substituted in the popular mind for all other history of the period. Thus it is to this play that the great majority of those at all familiar with old English history in its substantial reality, not as a meagre chronological abridgment of names and events, but exhibiting the men and deeds of the times, are indebted generally for their earliest and always their most vivid, impressive, and true conceptions of England's feudal ages. Of the ten plays of this historic series, 1 *Henry IV.* is the most brilliant and various, and, therefore, the most attractive; while it is substantially as true as any of the rest in its historical instruction — although



it is neither a dramatized chronicle in the old fashion, nor yet a strictly historical drama in the sense in which *Richard II.* and *Julius Cæsar* are pre-eminently indebted to that appellation — as presenting only historical personages and great public events with the condensed effect and sustained feeling of dramatic unity and interest."

Falstaff is a character "hardly less complex, hardly less wonderful, than Hamlet." Nothing has been written about him that is better than Maurice Morgann's *Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff* (first published in 1777, and reprinted in 1820 and 1825), unfortunately long out of print. The fat knight is concisely described thus: "He is a man at once young and old, enterprising and fat, a dupe and a wit, harmless and wicked, weak in principle and resolute by constitution, cowardly in appearance and brave in reality, a knave without malice, a liar without deceit, and a knight, a gentleman, and a soldier, without either dignity, decency, or honour. This is a character which, though it may be decomposed, could not, I believe, have been formed, nor the ingredients of it duly mingled, upon any receipt whatever; it required the hand of Shakspeare himself to give to every particular part a relish of the whole, and of the whole to every particular part; alike the same incongruous, identical Falstaff, whether to the grave Chief-justice he vainly talks of his youth and offers to caper for a thousand, or cries to Mrs.

Doll, 'I am old! I am old!' although she is seated on his lap, and he is courting her for busses."

It is almost certain that 2 *Henry IV.* was written immediately after 1 *Henry IV.*, and before the entry of the latter on the Stationers' Registers, February 25th, 1598; for that entry shows that the name of Oldcastle, originally given to the fat knight in both plays, had already been changed to Falstaff. It was certainly written before Ben Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour*, which was acted in 1599; for in that play Justice Silence is alluded to by name.

The earliest edition of the play was a quarto printed in 1600; and in this the prefix "*Old.*" was accidentally retained before one of the speeches of Falstaff (i. 2. 113): "Very well, my lord, very well," etc.

No other edition of the play appears to have been issued before the publication of the folio of 1623, in which it was probably printed either from a transcript of the original manuscript, or from a complete copy of the quarto collated with such a transcript. "It contains passages of considerable length which are not found in the quarto. Some of these are among the finest in the play, and are too closely connected with the context to allow of the supposition that they were later additions inserted by the author after the publication of the quarto. In the manuscript from which that edition was printed, these passages had been most likely

omitted, or erased, in order to shorten the play for the stage." On the other hand, the quarto contains several passages which do not appear in the folio. Some of these were probably struck out by the author, and others by the Master of the Revels.

The play is inferior to 1 *Henry IV.* in dramatic interest, and has long disappeared from the stage. But as Furnivall remarks, "all continuations do fall off, and this is no exception to the rule. How are Hotspur and the first impressions of Falstaff to be equalled? Even Shallow cannot make up for them. There 's a quieter tone, too, in this *Part II.*, though the rhetorical speeches are still kept up by Northumberland and Mowbray. The King leads, not at the head of his army, but in his quiet progress to the grave."

*Henry V.*, in the form in which we now have it, was first published in the folio of 1623, but a mutilated and incomplete quarto edition, probably compiled from short-hand notes taken at the theatre, was issued in 1600 and reprinted in 1602.

The date of the play is fixed by a passage in the chorus of the last act:—

"Were now the general of our gracious empress —  
As in good time he may — from Ireland coming," etc.

This evidently refers to Lord Essex, who went to Ireland, April 15, 1599, and returned to London, September 28, of the same year. Unless the passage was a later insertion, which is not probable, the

play must have been written between those dates. It is not mentioned by Meres in 1598 in the list given above, which, as we have seen, includes *Henry IV.*

*Henry V.* was Shakespeare's ideal king, and his history as prince and as sovereign runs through three plays — 1 and 2 *Henry IV.* and *Henry V.* The two former are really but one play, divided for the stage on account of its length; and the latter continues the history of Prince Hal, who has been a prominent actor in the earlier parts of the trilogy. Similarly, the history of *Henry IV.* had begun in the play of *Richard II.* where Bolingbroke is perhaps a more important personage than the weak monarch whose title he usurps, and who gives his name to the drama. That play prepares us for the right understanding of the King in *Henry IV.*; and the development of the Prince, his son, in the latter leads up to his presentation as sovereign in *Henry V.* The four plays should be read as a connected composition if we would fully appreciate the poet's plan and aim.

The delineation of the Prince in *Henry IV.*, which at first glance seems inconsistent with that of the King in *Henry V.*, is in reality thoroughly in keeping therewith. At first we are inclined to say, with the Archbishop in the opening scene of *Henry V.*:—

“ The courses of his youth promised it not.

The breath no sooner left his father's body

But that his wildness, mortified in him,  
 Seem'd to die too ; yea, at that very moment  
 Consideration, like an angel, came  
 And whipp'd the offending Adam out of him,  
 Leaving his body as a paradise  
 To envelope and contain celestial spirits.  
 Never was such a sudden scholar made ;  
 Never came reformation in a flood  
 With such a heady currance, scouring faults ;  
 Nor never hydra-headed wilfulness  
 So soon did lose his seat and all at once  
 As in this king."

But Shakespeare is careful that this remarkable change shall not appear like the sudden reform of the villain in the average modern melodrama. In the very first scene in which the Prince appears, the poet takes pains to show us his real character. He is introduced in the company of his wild friends, and joins them in planning the Gadshill robbery ; but when they leave him the poet detains him on the stage for a soliloquy in which the true prince utters himself : —

" I know you all, and will awhile uphold  
 The unyoked humour of your idleness ;  
 Yet herein will I imitate the sun,  
 Who doth permit the base contagious clouds  
 To smother up his beauty from the world,  
 That, when he please again to be himself,  
 Being wanted, he may be more wonder'd at,  
 By breaking through the foul and ugly mists

Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.  
If all the year were playing holidays,  
To sport would be as tedious as to work ;  
But when they seldom come, they wish'd-for come,  
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.  
So, when this loose behaviour I throw off  
And pay the debt I never promised,  
By how much better than my word I am,  
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes ;  
And like bright metal on a sullen ground,  
My reformation, glittering o'er my fault,  
Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes  
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.  
I'll so offend, to make offence a skill,  
Redeeming time when men think least I will."

This soliloquy has puzzled some of the critics and offended others. Furnivall says: "Prince Hal, afterwards Henry the Fifth, is Shakspeare's hero in English history. He takes not Cœur-de-lion, Edward the First or the Third, or the Black Prince of Wales, but Henry of Agincourt. See how he draws him by his enemy Vernon's mouth, how modestly he makes him challenge Hotspur, how generously treat that rival when he dies; how he makes him set Douglas free, praise Prince John's deed, save his father's life, give Falstaff the credit of Hotspur's death! Yet, on the other hand, he shows us him as the companion of loose-living, debauched fellows, highway-robbers, thieves, and brothel-hunters, himself breaking the law, lying to

the sheriff on their behalf. And what is the justification, the motive for all this? To astonish men, to win more admiration —

‘So when this loose behaviour I throw off,’ etc.

(i. 2. 212 fol.).

“Surely this is a great mistake of Shakspeare’s; surely in so far as the prince did act from this motive, he was a charlatan and a snob.”

When we are tempted to say that Shakespeare has made a mistake, it is well to pause and consider whether the mistake is not ours rather than his. In this instance, it is clearly the critic, not the dramatist, who is at fault. Furnivall seems to have overlooked the exigencies of the stage soliloquy, which, while it is a device for unfolding to us the inmost thoughts and feelings of the person, does not in all cases present them in the exact form in which they exist in his mind and heart. Here, for example, we may readily admit all that Henry claims for himself, without supposing that he would have said it, even to himself, in the formal way in which the dramatist is compelled to give it. There is an element of sophistry in it, we may admit, but no snobbishness. The young man is not wholly forgetful of his rank and his responsibilities. When his conscience pricks him for yielding to the temptation to study low life in London, he excuses himself with the thought that the burden of these responsibilities is not yet laid upon his

shoulders. He justifies his present fooleries as the harmless whim of a young man who has nothing of importance to do; and he promises himself that when the call of duty comes he will obey it. Thus doing, he says that he shall appear like the sun breaking through clouds, the brighter for its temporary obscuration.

This thought follows, not precedes, the conduct to which it refers; it is a comment upon it as it will strike others, not a reminiscence of the motive that prompted it. If, at the outset, he had deliberately planned his wild career with a view to the impression he now suggests it will make, it would have been a piece of contemptible stage trickery; but we may be sure that Henry was incapable of thus shaping his behaviour for mere theatrical effect; and Shakespeare was incapable of the blunder it would have been to represent him as doing it.

As the poet approached his task in this final portion of the trilogy he must have felt the peculiar difficulties it involved. The title-page of the first edition of the play terms it a "chronicle history," and, whether Shakespeare was responsible for this designation or not, it aptly expresses the character of the production. It is an epical treatment of his subject, though cast in a dramatic mould. Like Homer, the poet begins by invoking the Muse, and, like the ancient poet, he dwells at times on details prosaic in themselves—such as



the grounds of Henry's title to the crown of France — but which, though unpoetical, were an important part of the history, and therefore interesting to his countrymen. The choruses, which, though they answer a purpose in bridging over the long intervals in the action, are not absolutely necessary, appear to have been due in part to this merely semi-dramatic method of composition. As has been well said, they are “a series of brief lyrical poems, for, though not lyrical in metre, they are strictly so in spirit, crowded with a quick succession of rapidly passing brilliant scenes, majestic images, glowing thoughts, and kindling words.”

The result of this peculiar treatment of the poet's materials is naturally unlike all his other dramas. As a recent critic has remarked, “a siege and a battle, with one bit of slight love-making, cannot form a drama, whatever amount of rhetorical patriotic speeches and comic relief are introduced.” The king is really all the play; it is a “magnificent monologue,” and he the speaker of it. The other characters serve little purpose except to afford him breathing-spaces, and to set off his glory by contrast. In the preceding plays, as we have seen, we got, “under the veil of wildness,” glimpses of his nobler nature. He was the “true prince” even when he played the fool for lack of anything better to do. Weary with the formality of court life, he sought relief and diversion in scenes of low life — low, but with no shame about it — filled with

characters worthless enough, but interesting as studies of human nature. The Prince mingled with them, but was not one of them. He never forgot his royal destiny, never lost his true self, but let it lie latent, ready to awake when the call should come for action worthy of it.

And now the prince to whose advent to the throne his father and all who were thoughtful for the weal of England looked forward with fear and anxiety, has become the king — and what a change! His prodigal habits drop from him like a jester's robe that he had assumed as a disguise, and the real man who had been masquerading in them stands forth "every inch a king" — a king to whom the sturdiest republican might concede the divine right to rule, so completely do all royal gifts and graces unite in his character. He is profoundly conscious of his responsibilities and duties as a sovereign, yet not weakly sinking under them, but accepting the trust as from God, and doing the work as for God, relying on Him in battle, and rendering to Him the praise of the victory. This was, indeed, not the Henry of history; but as an ideal hero, the perfect flower of chivalry and piety, the character is unrivalled in its way in Shakespeare's long gallery of manly portraiture.

It may be added that Henry V. speaks more lines than any other character in Shakespeare. Besides 1063 in this play (out of 3380) he has 616 in 1 *Henry IV.* and 308 in 2 *Henry IV.*, making 1987 in

all. Falstaff comes next, having 719 in 1 *Henry IV.*, 688 in 2 *Henry IV.*, and 488 in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, or 1895 in all. Of characters that appear in only a single play, Hamlet comes first, with 1569 lines.

It seemed best to discuss the plays in which Henry V. appears as prince and as king before taking up *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, though this play was written between 2 *Henry IV.* and *Henry V.* That it was written after 2 *Henry IV.* is evident from the fact that Falstaff in that play was originally called Oldcastle, but not in this one. It has been urged that it must have been produced before *Henry V.* in which Falstaff's death is recorded; but it is not necessary to regard the *Merry Wives* as an integral part of the historical trilogy. If it was written at the request of Elizabeth, the dramatist would not have hesitated to resuscitate the knight for her gratification. It is more probable, however, that, as Rowe asserts, it was because she was "so well pleased with the admirable character of Falstaff in the two parts of 'Henry the Fourth,' that she commanded him to continue it for one play more, and to show him in love;" and if, as Dennis declared (in 1702), "she was so eager to see it acted that she commanded it to be finished in fourteen days," the dramatist would doubtless have postponed the completion of the trilogy in order to do it. Some critics doubt this story of the origin of the play, but the placing of the scene at Windsor,

and the complimentary allusions to Windsor Castle, favour the tradition that the play was written in obedience to a royal command. The story, given independently by Dennis and by Rowe, was repeated in 1710 by Gildon, who is often referred to as a competent authority on theatrical history; and it was accepted without question by Pope, Theobald, and other of the early editors.

Some of the more recent critics have been more skeptical; but they are ably answered by Verplanck thus: "Yet, as Rowe relates his anecdote on the same authority with that on which most of the generally received facts of the poet's history are known, acknowledging his obligations to Betterton 'for the most considerable passages' of the biography; as Betterton was then seventy-four years of age, and thus might have received the story directly from contemporary authority; as Gildon was Betterton's friend and biographer, and as Dennis (a learned acute man, of a most uninventive and matter-of-fact mind) told his story seven or eight years before, 'with a difference,' yet without contradiction, so as to denote another and an independent source of evidence; as Pope, the rancorous enemy of poor Dennis, whom he and his contemporary wits have 'damned to everlasting fame,' received the traditions without hesitation; we have certainly, in the entire absence of any external or internal evidence to the contrary, as good a proof as any such insulated piece of literary history could well require or

receive, although it may not amount to such evidence as might be demanded to establish some contested point of religious or legal or political opinion."

The earliest edition of *The Merry Wives* was a quarto printed in 1602, with the following title-page:—

"A | Most pleasaunt and | excellent conceited Co-  
 | medie, of Syr *John Falstaffe*, and the | merrie  
 Wiues of *Windsor*. | Entermixed with sundrie |  
 variable and pleasing humors of Syr *Hugh* | the  
 Welch Knight, Iustice *Shallow*, and his | wise  
 Cousin M. *Slender*. | With the swaggering vaine of  
 Auncient | *Pistoll*, and Corporall *Nym*. | By *William*  
*Shakespeare*. | As it hath bene diuers times Acted  
 by the right Honorable | my Lord Chamberlaines  
 servants Both before her | Maiestie, and else-where.  
 | LONDON | Printed by T. C. for Arthur Iohnson;  
 and are to be sold at | his shop in Powles Church-  
 yard, at the signe of the | Flower de Leuse and the  
 Crowne. | 1602."

A second quarto was published in 1619. These editions appear to be a pirated version of the play as first written, probably in 1599.

This early sketch was afterwards revised and enlarged to about twice the original length; and this is the form in which it appears in the folio of 1623. Internal evidence shows that this revision was made after James came to the throne, and probably about 1605.

The critics have wasted much ink and ingenuity in trying to decide at what point in the career of Falstaff these Windsor adventures belong; but, as already suggested, we may consider the comedy as having a certain independence of the histories and not to be brought into chronological relations to them. As White remarks, "Shakespeare was not writing biography, even the biography of his own characters. He was a poet, but he wrote as a playwright; and the only consistency to which he held himself, or can be held by others, is the consistency of dramatic interest."

If we are to make a connected and consistent biography of Sir John out of the four plays, there is no alternative but to adopt the hypothesis of Verplanck and some other critics who put the Windsor exploits *before* all the other experiences of the knight recorded by Shakespeare. Elizabeth may have induced the poet to write a play "with Sir John in it" in the rôle she proposed, but after comparing the new Sir John with the old we are constrained to say "this is not the man." At some uncertain period before we meet him in Eastcheap he may indeed have been capable of such fatuity, but he was too old a bird then to be caught with the chaff of the merry wives.

Hartley Coleridge, in his *Essays and Marginalia*, remarks: "That Queen Bess should have desired to see Falstaff making love proves her to have been, as she was, a gross-minded old baggage. Shakespeare

has evaded the difficulty with great skill. He knew that Falstaff could not be in love; and has mixed but a little, a very little, *pruritus* with his fortune-hunting courtship. But the Falstaff of the *Merry Wives* is not the Falstaff of *Henry IV*. It is a big-bellied impostor, assuming his name and style, or, at best, it is Falstaff in dotage. The Mrs. Quickly of Windsor is not mine hostess of the Boar's Head; but she is a very pleasant, busy, good-natured, unprincipled old woman, whom it is impossible to be angry with. Shallow should not have left his seat in Gloucestershire and his magisterial duties. Ford's jealousy is of too serious a complexion for the rest of the play. The merry wives are a delightful pair. Methinks I see them, with their comely, middle-aged visages, their dainty white ruffs and toys, their half-witch-like conic hats, their full farthingales, their neat though not over-slim waists, their housewifely keys, their girdles, their sly laughing looks, their apple-red cheeks, their brows the lines whereon look more like the work of mirth than years. And sweet Anne Page—she is a pretty little creature whom one would like to take on one's knee." It is noteworthy that Maurice Morgann, in his essay on Falstaff, avoids the *Merry Wives*.

Among the sources from which it has been supposed that Shakespeare may have got some hints for the plot of the *Merry Wives* are two tales in Straparola's *Le Tredici Piacevoli Notte*, and a modified version of one of these, under the title of "The

Lovers of Pisa" in Tarleton's *Newes out of Purgatorie*, 1590; the tale of Bucciolo and Pietro Paulo in the *Pecorone* of Giovanni Fiorentino; and "The Fishwife's Tale of Brainford" from *Westward for Smelts*. This last, however, was probably not published till 1620, though Malone refers to an edition of 1603.

Whether Shakespeare found his plot in Italian or other literature, the play is thoroughly English. "It 'smells April and May,' like Fenton. It has the bright healthy country air all through it: Windsor Park with its elms, the glad light-green of its beeches, its ferns, and deer. There is coursing and hawking, Datchet Mead, and the silver Thames, and though not

' The white feet of laughing girls  
Whose sires have march'd to Rome,'

yet those of stout, bare-legged, bare-armed English wenches plying their washing-trade. There 's a healthy moral as well: 'Wives may be merry and yet honest too.' The lewd court hanger-on, whose wit always mastered men, is outwitted and routed by Windsor wives" (Furnivall).

*The Taming of the Shrew*, first printed, so far as we know, in the folio of 1623, is a play which probably belongs to this period, though the critics differ widely as to its exact date, some making it as early as 1594, others as late as 1603. The internal evidence seems on the whole to favour putting it not



later than 1597, and possibly a year or two earlier. The play is not mentioned by Meres in 1598; but this may be, as has been suggested, because he "affects a pedantic parallelism of numbers" and gives only six comedies to balance his six "tragedies," as he calls them, or because the play is Shakespeare's only in part. Craik and Hertzberg, however, endeavour to prove that the *Love's Labour's Won* in Meres's list is *The Taming of the Shrew*; but the critics generally identify that play with the early version of *All's Well That Ends Well*.

*The Taming of the Shrew* is evidently an adaptation of an earlier play published anonymously in 1594 under the title of "A Pleasant Conceited Historie, called The taming of a Shrew," which had been "sundry times acted by the Right honorable the Earle of Pembrook his seruants." Fleay believes that this old play was written by Marlowe and Shakespeare in conjunction in 1589, but the critics generally agree that the latter had no hand in it. They also agree that somebody beside Shakespeare had a hand in the revision of the play. The most plausible theory, on the whole, is that of Furnivall and Dowden, who believe that *The Taming of The Shrew* is Shakespeare's adaptation, not of the original *Taming of a Shrew*, but of an enlarged version of that play made by some unknown writer. As Furnivall puts it, "an adapter, who used at least ten bits of Marlowe in it, first recast the old play, and then Shakspeare put into the recast the

scenes in which Katherina, Petruchio, and Grumio appear." Dowden remarks: "In *The Taming of the Shrew* we may distinguish three parts: (1) the humorous Induction, in which Sly, the drunken tinker, is the chief person; (2) a comedy of character, the Shrew and her tamer Petruchio being the hero and heroine; (3) a comedy of intrigue—the story of Bianca and her rival lovers. Now the old play of '*A Shrew*' contains, in a rude form, the scenes of the Induction, and the chief scenes in which Petruchio and Katherina (named by the original writer Ferando and Kate) appear; but nothing in this old play corresponds with the intrigues of Bianca's disguised lovers. It is, however, in the scenes connected with these intrigues that Shakspeare's hand is least apparent. It may be said that Shakspeare's genius goes in and out with the person of Katherina. We would therefore conjecturally assign the intrigue-comedy — which is founded upon Gascoigne's *Supposes*, a translation of Ariosto's *I Suppositi* — to the adapter of the old play, reserving for Shakspeare a title to those scenes — in the main enlarged from the play of '*A Shrew*' — in which Katherina, Petruchio, and Grumio are speakers."

Grant White also recognizes three hands in the play as it stands: "The first appears in the structure of the plot, and in the incidents and the dialogue of most of the minor scenes; to the last must be assigned the greater part of the love business between Bianca and her two suitors; while to

Shakespeare belong the strong, clear characterization, the delicious humour, and the rich verbal colouring of the recast Induction, and all the scenes in which Katherina and Petruchio and Grumio are the prominent figures, together with the general effect produced by scattering lines and words and phrases here and there, and removing others elsewhere, throughout the rest of the play."

This last point seems to me an important one; and it seems to explain the difficulty that some of the critics have had in deciding just how much Shakespeare had to do with certain parts of the present play. He *rewrote* considerable portions of the earlier one and *retouched* the rest.

The sources of the plot appear to be limited to the old play and Gascoigne's *Supposes*, already mentioned. The latter was "englished" from Ariosto in 1566. The story of the Induction has been traced as far back as the *Thousand and One Nights*; and Mr. Lane conjectures that it is founded on fact. It has been repeated in various languages and at various times. The old ballad of *The Frolicsome Duke, or the Tinker's Good Fortune*, in Percy's *Reliques* may be mentioned as an illustration.

The comic parts of the old play have considerable merit, but the serious or sentimental portions are generally poor, sometimes very poor. Shakespeare helped himself freely to the former where they suited his purpose, but the latter he used scarcely at all. For instance, in iv. 3 and iv. 5 he followed

the old play quite closely; and so, too, in the final scene until we come to Kate's long speech (136-179), where he gives us something all his own and in keeping with the character, instead of the pedantic homily on the creation of the world and of man, with which the earlier Kate is absurdly made to address her sisters. This is but one illustration out of many that might be cited to show how Shakespeare has bettered the characterization of the old play, not only by making the personages consistent with themselves, but also by lifting them to a higher plane of humanity. Kate, "curst" though she be, is not the vulgar vixen the earlier playwright made her; and Petruchio, if "not a gentleman," judged by the standard of our day, is much nearer being one than his prototype Ferando. The two Kates are tamed by the very same methods, but in the case of the first we miss all the subtle touches that show the result to be a genuine "moral reform," and make us feel that the Shrew has learned to love her conqueror as well as to respect him — "taming her wild *heart* to his *loving* hand," as Beatrice expresses it.

## CHAPTER XI.

### “THE GOLDEN PRIME OF COMEDY”

IN the closing years of the sixteenth century, after finishing the English historical plays (not counting *Henry VIII.* which was much later, and his only in part), Shakespeare returned to comedy and produced his three most brilliant works in that line, *As You Like It*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Twelfth Night*. All three appear to have been written between the summer of 1598 and the end of 1600, but in what order it is impossible to determine. The critics generally agree in regarding *Twelfth Night* as the last of the series, but there is some question whether *As You Like It* or *Much Ado* was the first.

These latter plays were both entered in the Stationers' Registers on the 4th of August, 1600. The year is not specified in the record, but is proved to be 1600 by other evidence in the Register. *Henry V.* was entered on the same date, together with Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*; but all are marked in the margin "to be staid." Why this restriction was imposed it is impossible to

decide; but the prohibition was soon removed, at least with regard to *Henry V.* and *Much Ado*, the former being duly licensed for publication on the 14th, and the latter on the 23d of August; and editions of both were issued before the end of the year. *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* were not printed, so far as we know, until they appeared in the folio of 1623.

For myself I like to regard *As You Like It* as the earliest of the plays in this "golden prime of comedy," written by the dramatist when the historical series was just finished, and perhaps as a rest for his imagination — the recreation that is gained by taking up a wholly different kind of literary work. The poet escaped for a season from camps and courts, and took a delightful vacation in the Forest of Arden. History was for the time forgotten, and free scope was given to imagination amid the scenes of a purely ideal life — an Arcadia where they "fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world." The result is this "sweetest and happiest of Shakespeare's comedies," a pastoral drama in which we have almost unbroken sunshine, no more of shadow being admitted than serves to give variety to the scene. It is not the shadow that forebodes the coming of night or of tempest; but rather like that of the passing summer cloud, or like that of the green canopy of a pleasant wood, falling, flecked with sunlight sifted through the leaves, upon the velvet sward below. No one suffers

seriously or for any great length of time. The banished Duke is only the happier for his exile, and exults in his escape from the artificial restraints of the court. In the end he is restored to his rank and position; and Rosalind, Celia, and the rest, who are made temporarily uncomfortable by the banishment of the Duke and other causes, soon forget their troubles in the forest, and are all happy at last. Nobody could be really miserable in that Forest of Arden. No matter what griefs and anxieties one brought thither, these soon vanished and were forgotten in “the charmed atmosphere.” Things might not be entirely to one’s mind at first, but one felt that they must soon become “as you like it.”

The play is not mentioned by Meres, whose *Paladis Tamia* was published in September, 1598; and it contains a quotation (iii. 5. 81) from Marlowe’s *Hero and Leander*, the earliest known edition of which appeared in the same year. We may therefore conclude, as nearly all the critics agree, that *As You Like It* was written between September, 1598, and August, 1600; probably in the year 1599.

Shakespeare was chiefly indebted for the story of the play to a novel by Thomas Lodge, published in 1590 under the title of “Rosalynde, Euphues Golden Legacie; found after his death in his Cell at Silixedra, Bequeathed to Philautus sonnes nursed up with their father in England. Fetcht from the

Canaries. By T. L., gent." This book was reprinted in 1592, and eight editions are known to have appeared before 1643.

Lodge seems to have taken some of the incidents of his novel from *The Cokes Tale of Gamelyn*, which is found in a few of the later manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales* of Chaucer, but which the best editors of that poet believe to be the production of another writer. Furness believes that the story had been dramatized before the date of the play, and that Shakespeare made some use of the earlier drama, but there is no external or internal evidence to support this theory. Grant White is probably right in regarding the Hymen episode in the last scene as an interpolation, like the Hecate passages in *Macbeth* and the Vision in *Cymbeline*. It will be observed that it makes an awkward break in the dialogue, which would run along very naturally without it.

Charles Lamb used to call *Love's Labour's Lost* the "Comedy of Leisure," because its characters not only "led purely ornamental lives" but were well content to do so, and, having nothing to do, did it agreeably; but, as Verplanck remarks, he might have given the title in a higher sense to *As You Like It*, where the pervading feeling is that of a refined and tasteful, yet simple and unaffected throwing off the stiff "lendings" of artificial society; and this is done by those who had worn those trappings with ease and grace. The humour too is toned down to



suit the general impression, being odd, fanciful, gay, and whimsical, without much connection with the more substantial absurdities of the real “workaday world.”

There is a tradition that Shakespeare himself played the part of Adam in *As You Like It*. William Oldys, who (about the middle of the eighteenth century) was collecting materials for a Life of Shakespeare, gives one version of the story thus: “One of Shakespeare’s younger brothers [probably Gilbert], who lived to a good old age, even some years, as I compute, after the restoration of King Charles the Second, would in his younger days come to London to visit his brother Will, as he called him, and be a spectator of him as an actor in some of his own plays. This custom, as his brother’s fame enlarged, and his dramattick entertainments grew the greatest support of our principal if not of all our theatres, he continued, it seems, so long after his brother’s death as even to the latter end of his own life. The curiosity at this time of the most noted actors to learn something from him of his brother, etc., they justly held him in the highest veneration; and it may be well believed, as there was besides a kinsman and descendant of the family, who was then a celebrated actor among them, this opportunity made them greedily inquisitive into every little circumstance, more especially in his dramattick character, which his brother could relate of him. But he, it seems, was so stricken in

years, and possibly his memory so weakened with infirmities, which might make him the easier pass for a man of weak intellects, that he could give them but little light into their enquiries; and all that could be recollected from him of his brother Will in that station was the faint, general, and almost lost ideas he had of having once seen him act a part in one of his own comedies, wherein, being to personate a decrepit old man, he wore a long beard, and appeared so weak and drooping and unable to walk, that he was forced to be supported and carried by another person to a table, at which he was seated among some company who were eating, and one of them sung them a song."

According to Rowe, the dramatist played "the Ghost in his own *Hamlet*." John Davies, of Hereford, in his *Scourge of Folly* (1610) says that he "played some kingly parts in sport." His name heads the list of those who took part in the first performance of Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour* (1598). In the list of "the principall actors in all these playes," prefixed to the folio of 1623, his name is also placed first, but perhaps only because he was the author of the plays.

*Much Ado About Nothing* was first published in quarto form in 1600, but was not reprinted until it appeared in the folio of 1623. The printers of the latter seem to have used a copy of the quarto belonging to the library of the theatre and corrected for the purposes of the stage; but the changes are

mostly very slight and seldom for the better. In iv. 2 “*Kemp*” is prefixed to most of the speeches of Dogberry, and “*Cowley*” or “*Couley*” to those of Verges. These are the names of actors of the time, and were probably inserted in the stage copy for their convenience in learning their parts. With the fourth speech in this scene we find the prefix “*Andrew*,” a name that cannot be identified with that of any comic actor of the period; but perhaps, as Halliwell-Phillipps suggests, it was the familiar appellation of some one in the company.

As the play is not mentioned in Meres’s list, while, according to the title-page of 1600, it had then been “sundrie times publikely acted,” it was probably written in 1599.

The earlier incidents of the serious portion of the plot may have been taken from the story of Ariodante and Ginevra in Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso* (canto v.); where Polinesso, in order to revenge himself on the princess Ginevra (who has rejected his suit and pledged her troth to Ariodante), induces her attendant Dalinda to personate the princess, and to appear at night on a balcony to which he ascends by a rope-ladder in sight of Ariodante, whom he has stationed there to witness the infidelity of Ginevra. A translation of this story was entered on the Stationers’ Registers in 1566; and in 1582 a play entitled “Ariodante and Genevora” was performed before the Queen “by Mr. Mulcaster’s children.” Spenser had also introduced the

story, with some variations, in the *Faerie Queene* (ii. 4. 17 fol.), and this part of the poem was published in 1590.

It is more probable, however, that Shakespeare drew this part of his materials from the 22d Novel of Bandello, which had been translated into French by Belleforest in his *Histoires Tragiques*, and probably also into English, though the version is not extant. In Bandello's book, as in the play, the scene is laid at Messina; the father of the slandered girl is Lionato; and the friend of her lover is Don Piero, or Pedro. How closely the poet has followed the novel will be seen from the outline of the latter given by Staunton: "Don Piero of Arragon returns from a victorious campaign, and, with the gallant cavalier Timbreo di Cardona, is at Messina. Timbreo falls in love with Fenicia, the daughter of Lionato di Lionati, a gentleman of Messina, and, like Claudio in the play, courts her by proxy. He is successful in his suit, and the lovers are betrothed; but the course of true love is impeded by one Girondo, a disappointed admirer of the lady, who determines to prevent the marriage. In pursuance of this object, he insinuates to Timbreo that Fenicia is false, and offers to show him a stranger scaling her chamber window. The unhappy lover consents to watch; and at the appointed hour Girondo and a servant in the plot pass him disguised, and the latter is seen to ascend a ladder and enter the house of Lionato. In an agony of

rage and jealousy, Timbreo in the morning accuses the lady of disloyalty, and rejects the alliance. Fenicia falls into a swoon; a dangerous illness supervenes; and the father, to stifle all rumours hurtful to her fame, removes her to a retired house of his brother, proclaims her death, and solemnly performs her funeral obsequies. Girondo is now struck with remorse at having ‘slandered to death’ a creature so innocent and beautiful. He confesses his treachery to Timbreo, and both determine to restore the reputation of the lost one, and undergo any penance her family may impose. Lionato is merciful, and requires only from Timbreo that he shall wed a lady whom he recommends, and whose face shall be concealed till the marriage ceremony is over. The *dénouement* is obvious. Timbreo espouses the mysterious fair one, and finds in her his injured, loving, and beloved Fenicia.”

The comic portion of the play is Shakespeare’s own, as indeed is everything else in it except this mere skeleton of tragic incident. Claudio and Hero, Don Pedro and Don John, are as really his own creations as Benedick and Beatrice, Dogberry and Verges, who have no part in Bandello’s novel or Ariosto’s poem.

It is a tribute of no slight significance to Shakespeare’s skill in the delineation of character that we instinctively regard the personages in his mimic world as real men and women, and are not satisfied to think of them only as they appear on the stage.

We like to follow them after they have left the scene, and to speculate concerning their subsequent history. This is well illustrated by not a few of the criticisms on the present play. The commentators are not willing to dismiss Benedick and Beatrice when the drama closes, without discussing the question whether they probably "lived happily ever after."

Mrs. Jameson says: "On the whole we dismiss Benedick and Beatrice to their matrimonial bonds rather with a sense of amusement than a feeling of congratulation or sympathy; rather with an acknowledgment that they are well-matched and worthy of each other, than with any well-founded expectation of their domestic tranquillity. If, as Benedick asserts, they are both 'too wise to woo peaceably,' it may be added that both are too wise, too witty, and too wilful to live peaceably together. We have some misgivings about Beatrice—some apprehensions that poor Benedick will not escape the 'predestinated scratched face,' which he had foretold to him who should win and wear this quick-witted and pleasant-spirited lady; yet when we recollect that to the wit and imperious temper of Beatrice is united a magnanimity of spirit which would naturally place her far above all selfishness, and all paltry struggles for power—when we perceive, in the midst of her sarcastic levity and volubility of tongue, so much of generous affection, and such a high sense of female virtue and honour, we are inclined to hope the best."

The poet Campbell, in his introduction to the play, remarks: “Mrs. Jameson concludes with hoping that Beatrice will live happy with Benedick, but I have no such hope; and my final anticipation in reading the play is the certainty that Beatrice will provoke her Benedick to give her much and just conjugal castigation. She is an odious woman. . . . I once knew such a pair. The lady was a perfect Beatrice; she railed hypocritically at wedlock before her marriage, and with bitter sincerity after it. . . . Beatrice is not to be compared, but contrasted, with Rosalind, who is equally witty; but the sparkling sayings of Rosalind are like gems upon her head at court, and like dewdrops on her bright hair in the woodland forest.”

Verplanck, after quoting this passage, comments upon it thus: “We extract this criticism, partly in deference to Campbell’s general exquisite taste and reverent appreciation of Shakespeare’s genius, and partly as an example of the manner in which accidental personal associations influence taste and opinion. . . . Beatrice’s faults are such as ordinarily spring from the consciousness of talent and beauty, accompanied with the high spirits of youth and health, and the play of a lively fancy. Her brilliant intellectual qualities are associated with strong and generous feelings, high confidence in female truth and virtue, warm attachment to her friends, and quick, undisguised indignation at wrong and injustice. There is the rich material which the

experience and the sorrows of maturer life, the affection and the duties of the wife and the mother, can gradually shape into the noblest forms of matronly excellence; and such, we doubt not, was the result shown in the married life of Beatrice."

Furnivall says on the same subject: "Beatrice is the sauciest, most piquant, sparkling, madcap girl that Shakspeare ever drew, and yet a loving, deep-natured, true woman too. . . . She gives her heart to Benedick. . . . The two understand one another. We all know what it means. The brightest, sunniest married life, comfort in sorrow, doubling of joy. . . . The poet Campbell's story of his pair was an utter mistake: he never knew a Beatrice."

Gervinus, after discussing the question at considerable length, and with due German profundity, comes to the same wise conclusion: "We have no reason to be anxious either for the constancy or for the peaceableness of this pair. The poet has bestowed upon them two names of happy augury."

Charles Cowden-Clarke, while he defends Beatrice against Campbell, strangely expresses the opinion that she does not really love Benedick. Their union, he thinks, was "like ninety-nine hundredths of the marriages that take place in society," one of mere friendship rather than strong mutual affection. He quotes in support of this view what Beatrice says in the arbour after being led to believe that Benedick is in love with her:—



“And, Benedick, love on; I will requite thee,  
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand.  
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee  
To bind our loves up in a holy band;  
For others say thou dost deserve, and I  
Believe it better than reportingly.”

He adds: “There is no avowal of passion, methinks, in that speech. It is merely an acquiescent one — ‘If thou *dost* love, my *kindness* shall incite thee’ to tie the knot.” So good a critic as Cowden-Clarke should have remembered that *kindness* in Shakespeare, as in other writers of the time, is often used in a much stronger sense than now. Schmidt, in his *Lexicon*, puts fully one-third of the instances in which the poet uses the word under the head of “affection, tenderness, love;” and this passage is very properly one of the number. Another striking one is in the 152d *Sonnet*: —

“For I have sworn deep oaths of thy deep kindness,  
Oaths of thy love, thy truth, thy constancy;”

where the second line explains the first. In this speech of Beatrice *kindness* is evidently used for variety of expression, the word *love*, in one form or another, occurring in every one of the four lines. The speech is really full of tender passion. It may strike one at first as too strong an outburst of affection for so sudden a one — and from the sarcastic Beatrice withal! But, as Mrs. Jameson and others

have noted, it was evident that Beatrice was ready to fall in love with Benedick at the opening of the play. Now that she believes him to be in love with her, the response of her own heart is prompt and unrestrained. No utterance of affection could be more impulsive or more earnest. "Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!" are almost her first words; and then follows that spontaneous and clearly joyous apostrophe, —

" And, Benedick, love on ; I will requite thee,  
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand."

And at once she goes on to the pledge of marriage, which no woman who did not love would have been so quick to do. Juliet's prompt surrender of herself to Romeo, when she is assured of his love, is not more sudden and unreserved. She is not more ready than Beatrice to look forward to the marriage which is to be the crown and consummation of that love.

When Don Pedro first suggested that Beatrice would be an excellent wife for Benedick, Leonato replied: "O Lord! if they were but a week married they would talk themselves mad." Some of the critics, as we have seen, have been confident that it was an unfortunate match; but, for myself, I have no doubt that it was one of the marriages made in heaven, and happy to the end.

The earliest reference to *Twelfth Night* that has been found is in a manuscript diary of John Man-

ningham, a member of the Middle Temple, which is preserved in the British Museum. The passage reads thus: —

“Feb. 2, 1601 [-2]. At our feast, wee had a play called Twelve Night, or What You Will. Much like the Comedy of Errors, or Menechmi in Plautus; but most like and neere to that in Italian called *Inganni*. A good practise in it to make the steward beleive his lady widdowe was in love with him, by counterfayting a letter as from his lady in generall termes, telling him what shee liked best in him, and prescribing his gesture in smiling, his apparaile, etc., and then when he came to practise, making him beleive they tooke him to be mad.”

As the play is not in Meres’s list, we may infer that it was written between September, 1598, when that book appeared, and February, 1602. It is assigned by the majority of the critics to 1600 or 1601.

There are two Italian plays entitled *GV Inganni* (The Deceits), published in the latter part of the 16th century, and containing incidents somewhat resembling those of *Twelfth Night*. In one of them the sister who assumes male apparel bears the name Cesare, which may have suggested Shakespeare’s *Cesario*. A third Italian play, *GV Ingannati*, has even a closer likeness to *Twelfth Night*, and in its induction we find the name Malevolti, of which *Malvolio* may be a variation. It has been recently discovered (see the preface to Furness’s “New Vari-

orum" edition of the play) that a Latin translation of this Italian drama, under the title of *Laelia* (the name of the heroine), was performed at Queen's College, Cambridge, in 1590, and again in 1598. Shakespeare's "small Latin" was large enough for the reading of this play, and he may have been indebted to it rather than any other source that has been suggested. It has been generally assumed that he must have read and used the version of the story by Barnaby Riche, in his *History of Apoloniuss and Silla*, included in *Riche His Farewell to Militarie Profession*; but Furness doubts that Shakespeare ever read the "coarse repulsive novel." The resemblances between the story and the play are few and slight. "Let nothing induce us to contaminate the spotless Viola and the haughty Olivia by the remotest hint of a kinship with the weak Silla and the brazen Julina."

From whichever source the dramatist derived the hint of his plot, he owed to it only a few incidents and the mere skeleton of some of the characters. Malvolio, Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, Fabian, the Clown, and Maria are entirely his own creation; as indeed all the other actors in the drama are in all that gives them life and individuality.

"Twelfth Night was, in the olden times, the season of universal festivity — of masques, pageants, feasts, and traditionary sports. This comedy then would not disappoint public expectation, when it was found to contain a delightful combination of

the delicate fancy and romantic sentiment of the poetic masque, with a crowd of revelling, laughing, or laugh-creating personages, whose truth all would recognise, and whose spirit and fun no gravity could resist. He gave to these the revelling spirit, and the exaggeration of character necessary for the broadest comic effect, but still kept them from becoming mere buffoon masquers by a truth of portraiture which shows them all to be drawn from real life. Malvolio — the matchless Malvolio — was not only new in his day to comic delineation of any sort, but I believe has never since had his fellow or his copy in any succeeding play, poem, essay, or novel. The gravity, the acquirement, the real talent and accomplishment of the man, all made ludicrous, fantastical, and absurd by his intense vanity, is as true a conception as it is original and droll, and its truth may still be frequently attested by actual comparison with real Malvolios, to be found everywhere, from humble domestic life up to the high places of learning, of the State, and even of the Church. Sir Toby certainly comes out of the same associations where the poet saw Falstaff hold his revels. He is not Sir John, nor a fainter sketch of him, yet with an odd sort of family likeness to him. Dryden and other dramatists have felicitated themselves upon success in grouping together their comic underplots with their more heroic personages. But here all, grave and gay, the lovers, the laughers, and the laughed-at, are made to har-

monise in one scene and one common purpose" (Verplanck).

*Twelfth Night* is the brightest and sunniest of the three plays of Shakespeare's "golden prime of comedy." *As You Like It* and *Much Ado* both have a larger admixture of the serious and sentimental, but that element in *Twelfth Night* is of the most delicate and ethereal character. The play was meant, as the title indicates, for the climax of the holiday season, when the sport and revelry are at their height, and sober occupations and serious interests are laid aside and forgotten. Only enough of the shadow of the workaday world is left to form a background to the lively picture, and to remind us that life is not all pleasure and pastime, but that after the *Twelfth Night* revels are over, the morning brings back its duties and responsibilities and "man goeth forth unto his labour until the evening."

The Hall of the Middle Temple (see page 127 above), where the play was acted in 1602, was built in 1572. It is one hundred feet long, forty-two feet wide, and forty-seven feet high; and the roof is the best specimen of Elizabethan architecture in London. The exterior has been modified considerably in more recent times, but the interior has suffered only slight changes since Shakespeare's day.

Hawthorne, in his *English Note-Books*, gives the following description of the hall: "Truly it is

a most magnificent apartment; very lofty, so lofty, indeed, that the antique roof is quite hidden, as regards all its details, in the sombre gloom that broods under its rafters. The hall is lighted by four great windows on each of the two sides, descending halfway from the ceiling to the floor, leaving all beneath enclosed by oaken panelling, which on three sides is carved with escutcheons of such members of the society as have held the office of reader. There is likewise in a large recess or transept a great window occupying the full height of the hall and splendidly emblazoned with the arms of the Templars who have attained to the dignity of Chief-justices. The other windows are pictured, in like manner, with coats of arms of local dignities connected with the Temple; and besides all these there are arched lights, high towards the roof, at either end, full of richly and chastely coloured glass; and all the illumination that the great hall had come through these glorious panes, and they seemed the richer for the sombreness in which we stood. I cannot describe, or even intimate, the effect of this transparent glory, glowing down upon us in the gloomy depth of the hall. The screen at the lower end is of carved oak, very dark and highly polished, and as old as Queen Elizabeth's time. . . . I am reluctant to leave this hall without expressing how grave, how grand, how sombre, and how magnificent I felt it to be. As regards historical associations, it was a favourite

dancing-hall of Queen Elizabeth, and Sir Christopher Hatton danced himself into her good graces there."

The feasts of Christmas, Halloween, Candlemas, and Ascension were formerly celebrated here with great magnificence. A Master of the Revels was chosen, and the Lord Chancellor, Judges, and Benchers opened the sports by dancing thrice around the sea-coal fire.

" Full oft within the spacious walls,  
 When he had fifty winters o'er him,  
 My grave Lord Keeper led the brawls ;  
 The Seal and Maces danced before him."

This judicial foolery was satirized by Buckingham in *The Rehearsal*, by Prior in his *Alma*, and by Donne in his *Satires* ; and Pope has his fling at it in the *Dunciad* : —

" The judge to dance, his brother serjeant calls."

It was in this hall at dinner-time that Mr. Richard Martin, the Bencher to whom Ben Jonson dedicated his *Poetaster*, was thrashed by Sir John Davies, who for this display of unruly temper was expelled from the society.

There can be little doubt that *Julius Caesar* belongs to this period. It was first printed in the folio of 1623, but was certainly written before 1601, when it is alluded to in Weever's *Mirror of Martyrs*, printed in that year, as follows : —



“The many-headed multitude were drawne  
By Brutus’ speech, that Cæsar was ambitious;  
When eloquent Mark Antonie had showne  
His vertues, who but Brutus then was vicious?”

This was probably written in 1599, as the author in his dedication says: “This poem, which I present to your learned view, some two yeares ago was made fit for the print.” The allusion cannot be to Plutarch, who does not give the two speeches. Those which are found in Appian, of whom an English translation was published in 1578, have no points of resemblance to Shakespeare’s.

There were earlier plays on the same subject. One in Latin, entitled “Epilogus Cæsaris interfecti,” had been written as early as 1582, by Dr. Richard Eedes, and acted at Christ Church College, Oxford. This was very likely the drama referred to in *Hamlet* (iii. 2. 103 fol.):—

“*Hamlet*. My lord, you played once i’ th’ university, you say?

*Polonius*. That did I, my lord, and was accounted a good actor.

*Hamlet*. What did you enact?

*Polonius*. I did enact Julius Cæsar: I was killed i’ th’ Capitol; Brutus killed me.”

Gosson also, in his *Schoole of Abuse* (1579), refers to plays on the subject of *Cæsar and Pompey* (Ward). A *Julius Cæsar* was acted at Whitehall on the 1st of February, 1562; and a *Tragedy of Cæsar and*

*Pompey, or Cæsar's Revenge* appears, according to Craik, "to have been produced in 1594," though the earliest dated edition (mentioned by Malone) is of 1607.

But the only source to which Shakespeare appears to have been indebted was Sir Thomas North's version of *Plutarch's Lives* (translated from the French of Amyot), first published in 1579. He has followed his authority closely, not only in the main incidents, but often in the minutest details of the action. This has been well stated by Gervinus in his *Shakespeare Commentaries*: "The component parts of the drama are borrowed from the biographies of Brutus and Cæsar in such a manner that not only the historical action in its ordinary course, but also the single characteristic traits in incidents and speeches, nay, even single expressions and words, are taken from Plutarch; even such as are not anecdotal or of an epigrammatic nature, even such as one unacquainted with Plutarch would consider in form and manner to be quite Shakespearian, and which have not unfrequently been quoted as his peculiar property, testifying to the poet's deep knowledge of human nature. From the triumph over Pompey (or rather over his sons), the silencing of the two tribunes, and the crown offered at the Lupercalian feast, until Cæsar's murder, and from thence to the battle of Philippi and the closing words of Antony, which are in part exactly as they were delivered, all in this play is essentially

Plutarch. The omens of Cæsar’s death, the warnings of the augur and of Artemidorus, the absence of the heart in the animal sacrificed, Calpurnia’s dream; the peculiar traits of Cæsar’s character, his superstition regarding the touch of barren women in the course, his remarks about thin people like Cassius; all the circumstances about the conspiracy where no oath was taken, the character of Ligarius, the withdrawal of Cicero; the whole relation of Portia to Brutus, her words, his reply, her subsequent anxiety and death; the circumstances of Cæsar’s death, the very arts and means of Decius Brutus to induce him to leave home, all the minutest particulars of his murder, the behaviour of Antony and its result, the murder of the poet Cinna; further on, the contention between the republican friends respecting Lucius Pella and the refusal of the money, the dissension of the two concerning the decisive battle, their conversation about suicide, the appearance of Brutus’s evil genius, the mistakes in the battle, its double issue, its repetition, the suicide of both friends, and Cassius’s death by the same sword with which he killed Cæsar—all is taken from Plutarch’s narrative, from which the poet had only to omit whatever destroyed the unity of the action.”

It is evident, as Craik notes, that the character and history of Cæsar had taken a strong hold of Shakespeare’s imagination. There is perhaps no other historical personage who is so often alluded

to in the plays. After quoting illustrative passages from *As You Like It*, *2 Henry IV.*, *Henry V.*, the three parts of *Henry VI.*, *Richard III.*, *Hamlet*, and *Cymbeline*, Craik remarks: "These passages, taken altogether, and some of them more particularly, will probably be thought to afford a considerably more comprehensive representation of 'the mighty Julius' than the play which bears his name. We cannot be sure that that play was so entitled by Shakespeare. 'The Tragedy of Julius Cæsar,' or 'The Life and Death of Julius Cæsar,' would describe no more than the half of it. Cæsar's part terminates with the opening of act iii.; after that, on to the end, we have nothing more of him but his dead body, his ghost, and his memory. The play might more fitly be called after Brutus than after Cæsar. And still more remarkable is the partial delineation that we have of the man. We have a distinct exhibition of little else beyond his vanity and arrogance, relieved and set off by his good nature or affability. He is brought before us only as 'the spoilt child of victory.' All the grandeur and predominance of his character is kept in the background, or in the shade — to be inferred, at most, from what is said by the other *dramatis personæ* — by Cassius on the one hand and by Antony on the other in the expression of their own diametrically opposite natures and aims, and in a very few words by the calmer, milder, and juster Brutus — nowhere manifested by himself. It might

almost be suspected that the complete and full-length Cæsar had been carefully reserved for another drama. . . . He is only a subordinate character in the present play; his death is but an incident in the progress of the plot.”

Other critics have taken the same view of the title of the play, and some have apologized for it. Gervinus, for example, says that “it was fully intended that Cæsar should take but a small part in the action,” as the poet “had in his eye the whole context of the Roman civil wars for this single drama.”

It is true, as Hazlitt says, that in the play Cæsar “does nothing; indeed, he has nothing to do.” It might be added that he has nothing even to *say*, in the way of heroic utterance. But he is nevertheless the mainspring of the action, and appropriately furnishes the title for the drama. He dies, it is true, early in the third act; but his real action in the play, paradoxical as it may seem at first, *begins* with his death. He is, so to speak, a “very lively corpse;” and Shakespeare has emphasized the fact by several significant utterances. Note Antony’s graphic prophecy over the dead body of the Dictator — the vision of the “domestic fury and fierce civil strife” that are to follow the murder: —

“ And Cæsar’s *spirit*, ranging for revenge,  
Shall in these confines *with a monarch’s voice*  
Cry Havoc! and let slip the dogs of war.”

And later, how eloquently does Antony make “sweet Cæsar’s wounds, poor, poor dumb mouths,” speak for him to the crowd in the forum, who rush to “fire the traitors’ houses” with the very brands from the funeral pile of Cæsar! And Cæsar is still “the evil spirit” of the conspirators, as his ghost warns Brutus on his first visit, and will “see him again” on the battle-field of Philippi that is to settle his fate. And there at Philippi both Brutus and Cassius, as the dramatist takes pains to make them tell us with their own mouths, die by the very swords that had been turned against Cæsar. As Cassius falls, he cries:—

“Cæsar, thou art revenged  
Even with the sword that kill’d thee!”

and Brutus, looking on the dead body of Cassius, exclaims:—

“O Julius Cæsar, thou art mighty yet!  
Thy *spirit* walks abroad, and turns our swords  
In our own proper entrails.”

It is not long before he verifies this by his own suicide; and again, in his last words, he pays tribute to the power of the murdered Julius:—

“Cæsar, now be still;  
I kill’d not thee with half so good a will.”

Shakespeare meant that we should not fail to see that Cæsar, though dead, was indeed “mighty yet,”

the ruling spirit, the Nemesis, of the latter half of the play, making good his right to the honour given him in the title, as he had nowise had the opportunity of doing in the first half.

The play was popular, and many allusions to it are found in the literature of the time. Leonard Digges, in the verses printed in the 1640 edition of the *Poems*, tells us that it was more successful than Ben Jonson's Roman dramas, and incidentally refers to other of Shakespeare's plays. Addressing the “needy Poetasters of this age,” and advising them to bring out their “lame blanke Verse” at the inferior theatres, he adds:—

“I doe not wonder when you offer at  
Blacke-Friers, that you suffer : tis the fate  
Of richer veines, prime judgements that have far'd  
The worse, with this deceased man [Shakespeare] com-  
par'd.

So have I seene, when Cesar would appeare,  
And on the Stage at halfe-sword parley were,  
Brutus and Cassius : oh how the Audience  
Were ravish'd, with what wonder they went thence,  
When some new day they would not brooke a line  
Of tedious (though well labour'd) *Catiline* ;  
*Sejanus* too was irkesome, they priz'de more  
Honest *Iago*, or the jealous Moore.  
And though the *Fox* and subtil *Alchemist*  
Long intermitted could not quite be mist,  
Though these have sham'd all the Ancients, and might  
raise  
Their Anthours merit with a crowne of Bayes,

Yet these sometimes, even at a friends desire  
 Acted, have scarce defrai'd the Seacoale fire  
 And doore-keepers; when let but *Falstaffe* come,  
*Hall*, *Poines*, the rest you scarce shall have a roome  
 All is so pester'd [crowded]: let but *Beatrice*  
 And *Benedicke* be seene, loe in a trice  
 The Cockpit, Galleries, Boxes, all are full  
 To hear *Malvoglio*, that crosse garter'd Gull.  
 Briefe, there is nothing in his wit fraught Booke  
 Whose sound we would not heare, on whose worth looke  
 Like old coynd gold, whose lines in every page,  
 Shall passe true current to succeeding age.  
 But why doe I dead *Shakespeares* praise recite,  
 Some second *Shakespeare* must of *Shakespeare* write;  
 For me tis needlesse, since an host of men  
 Will pay to clap his praise to free my pen."

The "wit-fraught book" is of course the folio of 1623, to which Digges, seventeen years earlier, had contributed one of the prefatory poetical tributes, in which he also refers to *Julius Cæsar*: —

"Nor shall I e're beleeve, or thinke thee dead  
 (Though mist) untill our bankrout Stage be sped  
 (Impossible) with some new strain t' out-do  
 Passions of *Juliet*, and her *Romeo*;  
 Or till I heare a Scene more nobly take,  
 Then [than] when thy half-Sword parlying *Romans* spake,  
 Till these, till any of thy Volumes rest  
 Shall with more fire, more feeling be exprest,  
 Be sure, our *Shake-speare*, thou canst never dye,  
 But crown'd with Laurell, live eternally."



## CHAPTER XII.

DOMESTIC ANNALS, 1587-1605

WE have seen that in 1578 John Shakespeare and his wife mortgaged the Asbies estate to Edmund Lambert for a loan of £40; and that the next year they conveyed their interest in Snitterfield property, likewise a part of the inheritance of Mary Arden from her father, to Robert Webbe for £4.

In 1587 they were taking measures for the recovery of Asbies. The loan remaining unpaid, and the mortgage expiring in April of that year, they threatened John Lambert, the son and heir of Edmund, with a suit for the settlement of the business. Lambert was naturally desirous that this should be arranged without litigation, if possible, and it was agreed that, on cancelling the mortgage and paying £20, he should receive from the Shakespeares an absolute title to the estate, or the best title it was in their power to give. Having obtained the assent of William, who was his mother's heir-apparent, they were enabled to offer almost a perfect security; but it appears, from the records of subsequent litigation, that the intended compromise was abandoned.

It is not improbable that William made a visit to Stratford in 1587 for a conference with his parents concerning the Asbies mortgage. The sum of £20 (equivalent to from seven to ten times that amount now), to be paid in cash by Lambert, would have been of great value to them in their financial difficulties. It must have been a subject for anxious deliberation, and could hardly have been arranged without a personal interview between them and William; and if this occurred, it was doubtless in Stratford, not in London.

There is no record of any further proceedings in the Asbies matter until ten years later, in 1597, when John and Mary Shakespeare brought a suit against John Lambert for the recovery of the estate. This was probably done at the instigation of the dramatist, who doubtless furnished the means for the prosecution of the suit. As his mother's heir he had a prospective interest in the success of the litigation. "There were not merely the associations twining around the possession of a family estate to stimulate a desire for its restoration, but there was nearly at hand a very large increase in its annual value through the termination of a lease under which all but the dwelling was held from 1580 to 1601 at the inadequate rental of half a quarter of wheat and half a quarter of barley. Our knowledge of the course taken by the plaintiffs in furtherance of their object is imperfect, Lambert, in his answer to the above-mentioned bill, declaring

that another one of like import had been afterwards exhibited against him by John Shakespeare in his individual capacity, and of this independent action no explanatory records have been discovered. The mere facts, however, of the last-named suit having been instituted, and of John Shakespeare having taken out two commissions under it for the examination of witnesses, show that there was a tolerably well-furnished purse at his disposal, a circumstance which, unless the expenses were borne by the poet, is difficult to reconcile with the plaintive appeal of his wife and himself when they asked the court to bear in mind that 'the sayde John Lamberte ys of greate wealthe and abilitie, and well frended and alied amongst gentlemeu and freeholders of the countrey in the saide countie of Warwicke, where he dwelleth, and your saide orators are of small wealthe, and verey fewe frends and alyance in the saide countie.' The terms of this sample of legal policy must be attributed to the counsel, but the facts, so far at least as they affect the parents of the great dramatist, were no doubt correctly stated. It appears that the suit was carried on for very nearly two years, publication having been granted in October, 1599, but, as no decree is recorded, it is all but certain that either the plaintiffs retired from the contest, or there was a compromise in favour of the possession of the land by the defendants. Had it been otherwise, something must have been afterwards heard of the

Shakespearean ownership of the estate" (Halliwell-Phillipps).

In 1596 the poet's only son died, and was buried on the 11th of August at Stratford. He also lost his uncle Henry, the farmer of Snitterfield, during the Christmas holidays, in which his company had the honour of performing twice before Elizabeth at Whitehall.

The records concerning the poet's own family after he went to London are few and slight, but they doubtless continued to reside in his native town. Tradition says that he visited Stratford once a year, and, as soon as he was able, he began to make arrangements for again establishing his home there.

In the spring of 1597 he made his first investment in real estate by the purchase of New Place, a mansion with nearly an acre of land in the centre of Stratford. He paid £60 for it, a moderate price for such a property, but in a document of about 1549 it is described as having then been for some time "in great ruyne and decay and unrepayred," so that it was probably in a dilapidated condition when it was transferred to Shakespeare. There are reasons for believing that it was renovated by the new owner; but whatever may have been its state of repair at the time of its acquisition, it was unquestionably one of the largest dwellings in the town. Sir Hugh Clopton, for whom it was erected, speaks of it in 1496 as his "great house," a title by

which it was popularly known at Stratford for upwards of two centuries; but scarcely any details concerning its architecture have been discovered. We know, however, that it was mainly built of brick, on stone foundations, that it was gabled, and that there was a bay-window on the eastern or garden side, but little beyond this. Two eye-witnesses only, out of the numbers who had seen the building previously to its destruction, have left memorials, and those but slight notices, of its appearance. Leland, who wrote about the year 1540, simply describes it as "a praty house of bricke and tymbre," words which may imply either that the upper part was formed entirely of wood or that there were large portions of brickwork in the outer walls. There is no genuine drawing or engraving of the mansion as it appeared in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. The earliest existing sketch was made about the year 1715, after the house had been demolished and rebuilt by Sir John Clopton, into whose possession it came through his wife, in 1677. He modified the ground-plan, and apparently changed the whole construction of the house.

Theobald, who was acquainted with Sir Hugh Clopton (upon whom Sir John settled it), was told by that gentleman that Shakespeare "repaired and modelled it [New Place] to his own mind," as he naturally would have done with an old dilapidated house that he had bought for his future residence.

In 1596 John Shakespeare, doubtless on his son's

advice and at his expense, applied to the College of Heralds for a coat-of-arms. In the application he stated that in 1568, when he was bailiff of Stratford and a justice of the peace, he had obtained from Robert Cook, the Clarenceux herald, a "pattern" or sketch of an armorial coat. As this allegation is not noticed in the records of the College, Sidney Lee suggests that it "may be a formal fiction designed by John Shakespeare and his son to recommend their claim to the notice of the heralds." But Mrs. Stopes (*Shakespeare's Family*, 1901) believes that John may have told the truth. She quotes Sir John Ferne (*The Glorie of Generositie*, 1586), who says: "If any person be advanced into an office or dignity of publique administration, be it eyther Ecclesiasticall, Martiall, or Civill, . . . the Herald must not refuse to devise to such a publique person, upon his instant request, and willingness to bear the same without reproche, a Coate of Armes, and thenceforth to matriculate him with his intermarriages and issues descending in the Register of the gentle and the noble. . . . In the Civil or Political State divers offices of dignitie and worship doe merite Coates of Armes to the possessours of the same offices, as . . . Bailiffs of Cities and ancient Boroughs or incorporated townes." John Shakespeare had certainly been bailiff of Stratford in 1568, and we know that he was an ambitious man. The draft says that he then applied for arms, and that Cook sent him a "pattern."

Probably, as Mrs. Stopes suggests, he did not conclude the negotiations at that time, thinking the fees too heavy, or he might have delayed until he found his opportunity lost. The story of this draft, or the sight of it, may have stimulated the son to honour his parents by having them enrolled among the "armigeri" of the county.

In the 1596 application the claims are based on John's public office, on a grant to his "antecessors" by Henry VII. for special services, and on marriage with the daughter and heir of a gentleman of worship. Then a fuller draft was made out, also in 1596, changing "antecessors" to "grandfather."

On the 20th of October, 1596, a draft was prepared under the direction of William Dethick, Garter King-at-Arms, granting John Shakespeare's request for a coat-of-arms; and the same is described thus: "Gold, on a bend sable, a spear of the first, and for his crest or cognizance a falcon, his wings displayed argent, standing on a wreath of his colours, supporting a spear gold steeled as aforesaid." A pen sketch of the arms and crest is put in the margin, and above them the motto, "Non Sans Droict."

Neither of the drafts made in 1596 was duly executed, and three years passed, so far as any records indicate, before the effort to secure the desired end was renewed. In 1599 John addressed a new application to the heralds, in which he stated that the coat-of-arms described in the drafts of 1596 had

been "assigned" to him while he was bailiff, and he now asks for a "recognition" or "exemplification" of it. He also requests that he and his son may be allowed to quarter on the coat that of the Ardens of Wilmecote, his wife's family. The heralds accordingly prepared a draft granting the desired "exemplification" and quartering; but after tricking the coat of the Warwickshire Ardens in the margin of the draft, they substituted the arms of the Ardens of Alvanley in Cheshire.

Sidney Lee believes that this change was made because the Warwickshire relationship was doubtful, and the family "were certain to protest against any hasty assumption of identity between their line and that of the humble farmer of Wilmecote." So the heralds substituted the arms of another Arden family living so far away that they were not likely to learn of the suggested impalement of their arms with the Shakespeare shield, and "the heralds were less liable to the risk of litigation." "But the Shakespeares wisely relieved the College of all anxiety by omitting to assume the Arden coat."

This explanation, discreditable alike to the Shakespeares and to the heralds, is highly improbable. If the heralds feared to take the risk of granting the impalement of the Warwickshire coat, it is unlikely that they would have ventured to substitute the arms of a Cheshire family with which, as Mr. Lee himself says, "there was no pretence that Robert Arden of Wilmecote was lineally connected."



They are supposed not only to have run the risk of being detected in the fraud, but also of being unable to give any plausible reason for their action; while in the other case they might have pleaded that they had been led to believe there *was* a relationship between Mary Arden and the great Warwickshire family bearing the name. The Shakespeares apparently were not disposed to urge the petition for the impalement and quartering, as they refrained from taking advantage of it after it was granted. *They* would have run no risk in doing this, as they had not asked for the use of the Alvanley coat, and the heralds were alone responsible for permitting it.

Mrs. Stopes gives a more satisfactory explanation (see page 26). The arms of the elder branch of the Ardens were those of the old Earls of Warwick; the younger branches took the arms of the Beauchamps, with a difference. The heralds made the change in their sketch of the impalement because "Mary Arden was an heiress, not in the eldest line, but through a *second* son;" and the substituted arms were those borne, for a similar reason, by the Alvanley Ardens. The heralds "were only seeking correctness in their draft of the restitution of the Ardens' arms."

John Shakespeare died in 1601, only two years after his final application for the coat-of-arms. Whether the grant was completed before his death or not, there is no record of his using the impaled

Arden arms. Whether his son ever used it we do not know, but the impalement does not appear on any of the tombs or seals that have been preserved. He certainly used the Shakespeare arms; and he may have felt after obtaining them that they had become honourable enough, without displaying the connection with the Ardens. In 1599 William Shakespeare had made a name for himself that needed no borrowed lustre from ancestral rank.

Two years or more later, objection was made to Shakespeare's arms on the ground that they bore too close a resemblance to those of Lord Mauley, but the heralds answered that certain other coats were quite as much like Mauley's, and that the spear in Shakespeare's was a "patible difference." The heralds add with regard to the latter coat that "the person to which it was granted hath borne magistracy, and was justice of peace at Stratford-upon-Avon." This case, as appears from the answer of the heralds, was one of twenty-three concerning which exceptions were taken.

Shakespeare went to London in 1585 or 1586 a penniless adventurer, but in 1597 we find him investing his surplus income in the purchase of the best house in Stratford. The sources of his prosperity have been the subject of no little discussion among the biographers and critics, but there is nothing particularly mysterious about the matter. It is evident that he soon gained reputation both as an actor and as an author, and in both capacities

made money. The actor's business was then lucrative enough to attract the attention and excite the envy of pamphleteers. In *Ratseis Ghost* (1605) there is a passage in point which, as some critics believe, may allude to Shakespeare. Ratsey meets certain players and gets them to perform for his amusement. In return he gives them forty shillings and some gratuitous advice:—

“And for you, sirra, saies hee to the chiefest of them, thou hast a good presence upon a stage; methinks thou darkenst thy merite by playing in the country. Get thee to London, for, if one man were dead, they will have much neede of such a one as thou art. There would be none in my opinion fitter then thyselfe to play his parts. My conceipt is such of thee, that I durst venture all the mony in my purse on thy head to play Hamlet with him for a wager. There thou shalt learne to be frugall,—for players were never so thriftie as they are now about London—and to feede upon all men, to let none feede upon thee; to make thy hand a stranger to thy pocket, thy hart slow to performe thy tongues promise; and when thou feelest thy purse well lined, buy thee some place or lordship in the country, that, growing weary of playing, thy mony may there bring thee to dignitie and reputation; then thou needest care for no man, nor not for them that before made thee proud with speaking their words upon the stage. Sir, I thanke you, quoth the player, for this good counsell; I promise you I

will make use of it, for I have heard, indeede, of some that have gone to London very meanly, and have come in time to be exceeding wealthy. And in this presage and propheticall humor of mine, sayes Ratsey, kneele downe — Rise up, Sir Simon Two Shares and a Halfe; thou art now one of my knights, and the first knight that ever was player in England. The next time I meete thee, I must share with thee againe for playing under my warrant, and so for this time adiew.”

If the actor got a share in the theatre or its profits, it added materially to his income, but Shakespeare did not attain to this until 1599, after the Globe theatre was built. Greene, in his *Groatsworth of Wit*, makes a player boast that his share in “the stage apparel would be cheap at £200.” In *The Return from Parnassus* (1606), Kemp addresses the two Cambridge students who had requested him and Burbage to give them instruction, as follows: “Be merry, lads; you have happened upon the most excellent vocation in the world for money: they come north and south to bring it to our playhouse.” An epigram entitled “Theatrum Licentia,” in *Laquei Ridiculosi* (1613), reads thus: —

“Cotta’s become a Player, most men know,  
 And will no longer take such toying paines;  
 For here’s the spring (saith he) whence pleasures flow,  
 And brings them damnable excessive gaines;  
 That now are cedars growne from shrubs and sprigs,  
 Since Greene’s *Tu Quoque*, and those Garlicke Jigs.”

Greene's *Tu Quoque* was a very popular comic piece, and "Garlicke Jigs" is an allusion to certain dances that were much in favour with the "groundlings."

Shakespeare's annual income as an actor before 1599, according to Sidney Lee, is "not likely to have fallen below £100; while the remuneration due to performances at Court or in noblemen's houses, if the accounts of 1594 be accepted as the basis of reckoning, added some £15."

His work as a dramatist was far less remunerative. The highest price paid for a play before 1599, so far as we know, was £11, and the lowest was £6, to which some small amount was added as a gratuity if a play was particularly successful, and the author received a certain share of the receipts as a "benefit" on a second production. For revising an old play (such work as Shakespeare probably began with as a writer) £4 was sometimes paid.

Shakespeare's income from the revision and writing of plays up to 1599 can hardly have brought him more than £20 a year, which, added to £110 or £115 from acting, would make his entire income £130 or £135, equal to from seven to ten times that amount in modern money.

The quarto editions of his plays published at this time and afterwards were probably all piratical ventures which yielded him nothing. From the successive editions of his poems, which were published by his friend Field, and evidently under his per-

sonal supervision, he may have received something, but we have no means of estimating how much.

According to Rowe, the poet once received a gift of a thousand pounds from his generous patron, the Earl of Southampton. The amount (equal to at least £7,000, or about \$35,000 now) is quite certainly exaggerated; but it is probable that there is a basis of truth in the tradition. Southampton, who was so liberal to others, can hardly have omitted to make some substantial acknowledgment of the compliment paid him in the dedications of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*.

Shakespeare, unlike the great majority of men of genius, was eminently shrewd and practical. He knew how to make and invest money, and such a man is not likely to waste it. Besides taking care of his own family in Stratford, we have reason to believe that he helped to restore the fallen fortunes of his father, and to furnish the means for the Asbies litigation and the expenses of obtaining the coat-of-arms. The purchase of New Place in 1597 was followed by outlays for the renovation of the mansion, and adding other lands to the estate. A few years later, in 1602, he makes the large investment of £320 in the purchase of one hundred and seven acres of land near Stratford.

Halliwell-Phillipps suggests that this acquisition may be referred to by Crosse in his *Vertues Commonwealth*, 1603, when he says of the actors and dramatists of the period: "As these copper-lace

gentlemen growe rich, purchase lands by adulterous playes, and not fewe of them usurers and extortioners, which they exhaust out of the purses of their haunters, so are they puffed up in such pride and selfe-love as they envie their equals and scorne theyr inferiours."

In the same year (1602) Shakespeare bought a cottage and garden, situated in Chapel Lane opposite the lower grounds of New Place. The land was a quarter of an acre in area, with a frontage of forty feet on the lane.

In July, 1605, he paid £440 for the unexpired term of the moiety of a lease of the tithes of Stratford, Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe. The lease was made in 1544 for a term of ninety-two years, and therefore had thirty-one years to run when Shakespeare purchased an interest in it. His annual income from it was £38, according to Halliwell-Phillipps, "but it was necessarily of a fluctuating character, the probability, however, being that there was a tendency towards increase, especially in the latter part of his career. It is most likely that he entered into an agreement each year with a collector, whose province it would have been to relieve him of all trouble in the matter, and pay over a stipulated amount. It is not probable that he himself visited the harvest field to mark, as was then the local practice, every tenth sheaf with a dock, or that he personally attended to the destination of each of his tithe-pigs."

Although this purchase of the tithes involved Shakespeare in considerable litigation from time to time, on account of the conflicting interests involved, it was quite certainly a good investment. This may be inferred from the fact that his son-in-law John Hall, in August, 1624, disposed of his interest in the remainder of the lease for £400, the Stratford corporation being the purchaser; that is to say, after Shakespeare and his heirs had received the income for nineteen years, the value of the remainder (about two-fifths) was reckoned as more than ninety per cent. of the original cost.

Shakespeare's income in 1599, as we have seen, was probably £130 or £135. After the building of the Globe theatre in the latter part of that year, the Burbages leased for twenty-one years shares in the receipts to "those deserving men, Shakespeare, Hemings, Condell, Phillips, and others," all of whom were players in Shakespeare's company. There were sixteen shares in all, of which Shakespeare probably had two. The receipts of the theatre are supposed to have been about £8000 a year; and in 1635 an actor who owned a share is known from documentary evidence to have received from it more than £200 a year, in addition to his salary of £180 as player. The income from the shares may not have been so large in 1600-1610, but Shakespeare must have received from the theatre at least £500 a year.

In the latter part of 1609 Shakespeare acquired an interest in a lease of the Blackfriars theatre, in



connection with Hemings, Condell, and others; and this is estimated to have added some £100 to his income from that date.

From 1599 the returns from his plays also increased. Higher prices were obtained for new plays, averaging £20 or more; and performances at Court were more frequent and probably better paid. The Rev. John Ward, vicar of Stratford in 1661-63, may not have exaggerated much in saying that in his last years the poet "spent at the rate of a thousand a year." Of course there were some sources of revenue besides these already mentioned; as rents from houses and lands in Stratford and vicinity, profits from the sale of agricultural produce, in which he traded, etc.

Some of the poet's transactions led to lawsuits against delinquent debtors. In 1600, for instance, he brought an action against one John Clayton for £7 due, and obtained a verdict for the recovery of the amount. Again, in 1604, it appears, from a declaration filed in the Stratford court, that he had sold to one Philip Rogers several bushels of malt at various times between March 27th and the end of May, 1604, and that the latter did not pay the debt thus incurred, amounting to £1 19s. 10d.; and on June 25th Rogers borrowed two shillings of the poet, making in all £2 1s. 10d. Six shillings of this were afterwards paid, and the action was brought to recover the balance. We find record of other suits of the kind in 1608 and 1609.

The only epistolary correspondence in which Shakespeare was a party, and the only letter addressed to him, which are extant, have reference to business affairs. In January, 1598, Abraham Sturley writes from Stratford to his brother-in-law, Richard Quiney, who was in London, where the poet also was at that time, as follows: —

“ Most loving and belovedd in the Lord, — in plaine Englishe we remember u in the Lord, and ourselves unto u. I would write nothings unto n nowe, but come home. I prai God send u comfortabli home. This is one speciall remembrance from ur fathers motion. Itt seemeth bi him that our countriman, Mr. Shaksper, is willinge to disburse some monei upon some od yarde land or other att Shotterie or neare about us ; he thinketh it a veri fitt patterne to move him to deale in the matter of our tithes. Bi the instruccions u can geve him thearof, and bi the frendes he can make therefore, we thinke it a faire marke for him to shoote att, and not unpossible to hitt. It obtained would advance him in deede, and would do us muche good. Hoc movere, et quantum in te est per-movere, ne negligas, hoc enim et sibi et nobis maximi erit momenti. Hic labor, hic opus esset eximie et gloriae et landis sibi. U shall understande, brother, that our neighbours are growne with the wantes they feele throughe the dearnes of corne, which heare is beionde all other countries that I can heare of deare and over deare, malecontent.”

Richard Quiney, who was a leading business man in Stratford, was in London that year, endeavouring

to arrange important matters for the town, including the grant of a new charter and relief from a subsidy. He was not well furnished with means for conducting these affairs, the corporation having trouble and delay in procuring the necessary funds. Richard was also embarrassed on his own account, and later applied to Shakespeare for the large loan of £30. It is doubtful, however, whether the letter containing this request was ever forwarded to the poet. At any rate, it somehow got into the Stratford archives, probably on the death of Richard in his year of office. Perhaps he and Shakespeare happened to meet about the time when the letter was written, and arranged the business orally. The letter reads thus: —

“Loveinge contreyman, — I am bolde of yow. as of a ffrende, craveinge yowr helpe with xxx. *ll.* vpon Mr. Bushells and my securytee, or Mr. Myttons with me. Mr. Rosswell is nott come to London as yeate, and I have especiall cawse. Yow shall ffrende me muche in helpeing me out of all the debettes I owe in London, I thancke God, and muche quiet my mynde, which wolde nott be indebted. I am nowe towards the Cowrte, in hope of answer for the dispatche of my buysenes. Yow shall nether loase creddytt nor monney by me, the Lorde wyllinge; and nowe butt perswade yowrselſe soe, as I hope, and yow shall nott need to feare butt with all hartie thanckefullenes I wyll holde my tyme and content yowr ffrende, and yf we bargaine farther, yow shal be the paie-master yowrselſe. My tyme biddes me hastene to an

ende, and soe I commit thys [to] yowr care, and hope of yowr helpe. I feare I shall nott be backe thys night ffrom the Cowrte. Haste. The Lorde be with yow and with vs all, Amen ! ffrom the Bell in Carter Lane, the 25 October, 1598.

“ Yowrs in all kyndenes,

“ RYC. QUINEY.”

The letter is addressed, “To my loveinge good ffrend and countreymann Mr. Wm. Shackesperre deliver thees.”

An undated letter, written by Adrian Quiney to Richard in London, in 1598 or 1599, contains this passage:—

“ Yff yow bargen with Wm. Sha . . . or receve money therfor, brynge youre money homme that yow maye; and see howe knite stockynges be sold; ther ys gret byinge of them at Aysshome. Edward Wheat and Harrye, youre brother man, were both at Evyshome thys daye senet, and, as I harde, bestowe 20*li* ther in knyght hosse; wherefore I thynke yow maye doo good, yff yow can have money.”

The following is a portion of a very long letter written by Sturley to Richard Quiney, November 4th, 1598:—

“ All health, happines of suites and wellfare, be multiplied unto u and ur labours in God our Father bi Christ our Lord. Ur letter of the 25. of Octobr came to mi handes the laste of the same att night per Grenwai, which imported a stai of suites bi Sr. Ed. Gr. advise, untill &c., and that onli u should followe ou for tax and sub.

presentli, and allso ur travell and hinderance of answere therein bi ur longe travell and thaffaires of the Courte; and that our countriman Mr. Wm. Shak. would procure us monei, which I will like of as I shall heare when, and where, and howe; and I prai let not go that occasion if it mai sorte to ani indifferent condicions. Allso that if monei might be had for 30 or 40*l.*, a lease, &c., might be procured. Oh howe can u make dowbt of monei, who will not beare xxx*tie* or xl*s.* towards sutch a match! The latter end of ur letter which concerned ur houshold affaires I delivered presentli. Nowe to ur other letter of the 1<sup>o</sup> of Novmbr received the 3d. of the same. I would I weare with u; nai, if u continue with hope of those suietes u wrighte of, I thinke I shall wt. concent; and I will most willingli come unto u, as had u but advise and compani, and more monei presente, much might be done to obtaine our charter enlargd, ij. faires more, with tole of corne, bestes and sheepe, and a matter of more valewe then all that; for (sai u) all this is nothing that is in hand, seeinge it will not rise to 80*l.*, and the charges wil be greate. What this matter of more valewe meaneth I cannot undrstand; but me thinketh whatsoever the good would be, u are afraid of want of monei. Good things in hand or neare hand can not choose but be worth monei to bringe to hand, and, beinge assured, will, if neede be, bringe monei in their mouthes, there is no feare nor dowbte."

Further on the letter contains some quaint hygienic advice which is worth quoting:—

"Take heed of tobacco whereof we heare per Wm. Perri; against ani longe journei u mai undertake on foote

of necessiti, or wherein the exercise of ur bodi must be imploied, drinke some good burned wine, or aqavitæ and ale strongli mingled without bread for a toste, and, above all, kepe u warme."

The Greenway mentioned in the letter was the Stratford carrier, the people of the town being well contented in those days if they received letters from London once a week.

Richard Quiney was descended from his namesake, the Master of the Guild of Stratford-on-Avon in the time of Henry VIII. He was one of the leading tradesmen of the town, his father Adrian and himself being well-to-do mercers, who then dealt, at least in Warwickshire, not only in silk and cloth goods, but in such articles as ginger, sugar, and red-lead. Throughout the reign of Elizabeth the Quineys were influential members of the corporation, and were thus brought into contact with the poet's father during his official career. In January, 1572, John Shakespeare was nominated, with Adrian Quiney, then bailiff, to undertake the management of some important legal business connected with the affairs of the town. Richard Quiney, who married in 1580 the daughter and sole heiress of one Thomas Philipps, another of the Stratford mercers, was bailiff in 1592-1593 and again in 1601-1602, dying in the year last mentioned after a few weeks' illness, and before his term of office had expired. After his decease, his widow, Elizabeth, kept a

tavern. Her son Thomas afterwards married Judith Shakespeare, the poet's younger daughter.

Neither Mrs. Quiney nor Judith could write even their own names. "There were no free-schools for girls, and home education was, as a rule, the privilege of a section of the higher classes; so when Judith Shakespeare was invited in December, 1611, to be a subscribing witness to two instruments respecting a house at the southeast corner of Wood Street, then being sold by Mrs. Quiney to one William Mountford for the large sum of £131, in both instances her attestations were executed with marks."

John Shakespeare, as already mentioned, died in September, 1601, his funeral having taken place on the 8th of that month. No record of the site of his grave has been discovered, and all traces of a sepulchral memorial, if one were ever erected, either within or without the church, have entirely disappeared. He left no will, so far as is known, and his son inherited the Henley Street property. His widow continued to reside in one of the tenements, and the other was rented.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THEATRICAL AFFAIRS, 1595-1605.

WHEN Shakespeare first came to London, there were, as we have seen, only two theatres in the city or its suburbs, the Theatre and the Curtain, both in Shoreditch. In February, 1592, a third playhouse, the Rose, was opened by the actor and manager, Philip Henslowe. It was situated on the Bankside in Southwark, and "was doubtless the earliest scene of Shakespeare's pronounced successes alike as actor and dramatist." In 1594 he was connected with another new theatre at Newington Butts; and later (1595-1599) he returned to the Theatre and the Curtain. The latter playhouse was kept up until after his death, but the Theatre was torn down in 1599, and most of the materials used by the Burbages in the erection of the Globe on the Bankside. From the opening of this theatre until he gave up acting it appears to have been the only one with which he was regularly connected.

The Blackfriars theatre, originally a dwelling-house converted into a theatre by James Burbage in 1596, was in the city, not far from the northern



end of the present Blackfriars bridge. The site is commemorated by Play House Yard, which now has no theatrical suggestions except the name, but resounds with the roar of the engines and presses in the printing offices of the *Times*.

Blackfriars gets its name from the Dominican monks, who came to England in 1221 and first settled on the land now occupied by Lincoln's Inn, but in 1276 moved to the banks of the Thames, where they built a splendid monastery and church. Here Edward I. deposited the heart of his beloved Eleanor, and here many eminent men and women were afterwards buried. Here also several Parliaments held their sessions, including the "Black Parliament," which took its name from the locality. The monastery has historical associations with Shakespeare, aside from his connection with the theatre that later occupied the site; for it was here that the trial of Katherine of Arragon took place in 1529, when the two cardinals, Wolsey and Campeggio, sate in judgment upon that "poor weak woman fallen from favour" (*Henry VIII.* iii. 1. 20); and here, a few months later Parliament pronounced its sentence of condemnation against Wolsey himself.

It was at the Blackfriars theatre, in September, 1598, that Shakespeare played a leading part in Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*, after having secured the acceptance of the play which the manager was on the point of refusing (Rowe).

The plan to establish the Blackfriars theatre in 1596 was strenuously opposed by the inhabitants of the district. Their petition to the Privy Council is interesting as an illustration of the Puritan spirit of the time: —

“ To the right honorable the Lords and others of her Majesties most honorable Privy Councill, — Humbly shewing and beseeching your honors, the inhabitants of the precinct of the Blackfryers, London, that whereas one Burbage hath lately bought certaine roomes in the same precinct neere adjoyning unto the dwelling houses of the right honorable the Lord Chamberlaine and the Lord of Hunsdon, which romes the said Burbage is now altering and meaneth very shortly to convert and turne the same into a comon playhouse, which will grow to be a very great annoyance and trouble, not only to all the noblemen and gentlemen thereabout inhabiting but also a generall inconvenience to all the inhabitants of the same precinct, both by reason of the great resort and gathering togeather of all manner of vagrant and lewde persons that, under cullor of resorting to the playes, will come thither and worke all manner of mischeefe, and also to the greate pestring and filling up of the same precinct, yf it should please God to send any visitation of sicknesse as heretofore hath been, for that the same precinct is allready growne very populous; and besides, that the same playhouse is so neere the Church that the noyse of the drummes and trumpetts will greatly disturbe and hinder both the ministers and parishioners in tyme of devine service and sermons;— In tender consideracion wherof, as also for that there

hath not at any tyme heretofore been used any comon playhouse within the same precinct, but that now all players being banished by the Lord Mayor from playing within the Cittie by reason of the great inconveniences and ill rule that followeth them, they now thincke to plant themselves in liberties;—That therefore it would please your honors to take order that the same roomes may be converted to some other use, and that no playhouse may be used or kept there; and your suppliants as most bounden shall and will dayly pray for your Lordships in all honor and happines long to live.”

This petition was presented to the Privy Council in November, 1596, but it did not prevent the opening of the theatre as soon as the reconstruction of the old mansion was completed. In 1597 we find it occupied by the company of boy-actors, mostly from the choristers of the Chapel Royal, and known as the Children of the Chapel. Their success led to the formation of other boy-companies; and these soon became so popular that they seriously interfered with the interests of the veteran actors. The latter naturally became bitterly hostile to their juvenile rivals, who were especially in favour with the better portion of the public. In *Jack Drum's Entertainment*, which was played by the Children of Paul's, in 1601, we find direct reference to this:

“*Sir Edward.* I sawe the Children of Powles last  
 night,  
 And troth they pleas'd me prettie, prettie well.  
 The Apes in time will do it handsomely.

*Planet.* I' faith I like the Audience that frequenteth  
there,  
With much applause. A man shall not be choakte  
With the stench of Garlicke, nor be pasted  
To the balmy Jackett of a Beer-brewer.  
*Brabant, Jn.* 'Tis a good gentle Audience, and I hope  
the Boyes  
Will come one day into the Courte of Requests.  
*Brabant, Sig.* Ay, and they had good playes, but they  
produce  
Such mustie fopperies of antiquitie  
As do not sute the humorous ages backs  
With cloathes in fashion."

It is to these boy-companies that Shakespeare alludes in *Hamlet* (ii. 2. 354 fol.) as an "aery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapped for't," etc.

The Puritan opposition to the theatres continued, and in June, 1600, was sufficient to induce the Privy Council to issue an order "for the restraints of the imoderate use and companie of Playehouses and Players." After referring to the complaints that have been made of "the manyfolde abuses and disorders" on account of the "many houses erected and employed in and about the cittie of London for common stage-playes," and particularly of the protests against a new playhouse to be built "by one Edward Allen, a servant of the right honourable the Lord Admyrall," the order goes on thus: —

“And yet, nevertheles, it is considered that the use and exercise of such playes, not beinge evill in ytself, may with a good order and moderacion be suffered in a well-governed state, and that her Majestie, beinge pleased at somtymes to take delight and recreation in the sight and hearinge of them, some order is fitt to be taken for the allowance and mayntenaunce of such persons as are thought meetest in that kinde to yealde her Majestie recreation and delighte, and consequently of the houses that must serve for publicke playinge to keepe them in exercise. To the eude, therefore, that both the greate abuses of the playes and playinge-houses may be redressed, and yet the aforesaide use and moderation of them retayned, the Lordes and the reste of her Majesties Privie Counsell, with one and full consent, have ordered in manner and forme as followeth, —

“Firste, — that there shal be aboute the Cittie two houses and no more allowed to serve for the use of the common stage-playes, of the which houses one shal be in Surrey in that place which is commonly called the Banckeside or therabouts, and the other in Middlesex. And forasmuch as their Lordships have bin enformed by Edmund Tylney, Esqr., her Majesties servante and Master of the Revells, that the house nowe in hand to be builte by the saide Edward Allen is not intended to encrease the number of the playhouses, but to be insteede of another, namely the Curtayne, which is ether to be ruyned and plucked downe or to be put to some other good use, as also that the scytuation thereof is meete and convenient for that purpose, it is likewise ordered that the saide house of Allen shal be allowed to be one of the two houses and namely for the house to be allowed in Middlesex for the company of players belong-

ing to the Lord Admirall, so as the house called the Curtaine be, as it is pretended, either ruynated or applyed to some other good use. And for the other house allowed to be on Surrey side, whereas their Lordships are pleased to permitt to the company of players that shall play there to make their owne choice which they will have of divers houses that are there, choosing one of them and no more, and the said company of plaiers, being the servantes of the Lord Chamberlain, that are to play there, have made choise of the house called the Globe, it is ordered that the saide house and none other shal be there allowed ; and especially it is forbidden that any stage-playes shal be played, as sometymes they have bin, in any common inne for publique assembly in or neare aboute the Cittie.

“ Secondly, — forasmuch as these stage-plaies, by the multitude of houses and company of players, have bin so frequent, not servinge for recreation but invitinge and callinge the people dayly from their trade and worke to myspend their tyme, it is likewise ordered that the two severall companies of players assigned unto the two houses allowed may play each of them in their severall house twice a weeke and no oftener, and especially they shall refrayne to playe on the Sabbath-day upon paine of imprysonment and further penaltie ; and that they shall forbear altogether in the tyme of Lent, and likewise at such tyme and tymes as any extraordinary sickness or infection of disease shall appeare to be in or about the cittie.

“ Thirdly, — because these orders wil be of little force and effecte unlesse they be duely putt in execution by those unto whome it appertayneth to see them executed, it is ordered that severall copies of these orders shal

be sent to the Lord Maior of London and to the Justices of the Peace of the counties of Middlesex and Surrey, and that lettres shal be written unto them from their Lordships straightly charging them to see to the execution of the same, as well by commyttinge to prison any owners of playhouses and players as shall disobey and resist these orders as by any other good and lawfull meanes that in their discretion they shall finde expedient, and to certifie their Lordships from tyme to tyme as they shall see cause of their proceedinges heerein."

Alleyn's new theatre here referred to was the Fortune in Cripplegate; but the order that this and the Globe should be the only playhouses allowed in the city and its suburbs was not enforced by the authorities. This naturally led to further complaints on the part of the Puritans; and on the 31st of December, 1601, the Lords of the Council addressed a letter to the Lord Mayor of London, reproving him for the neglect to enforce the order, and adding: "Wee do therefore once againe renew hereby our direction unto yow, as wee have donne by our lettres to the justices of Middlesex and Surrey, concerninge the observation of our former Order, which wee do praie and require yow to cause duellie and dilligentlie to be put in execution for all poyntes thereof, and especiallie for the expresse and streight prohibition of any more playhowses then those two that are mentioned and allowed in the said Order."

The letter to the magistrates of Surrey and Mid-

dlesex severely censured them for not doing their duty in enforcing the order, and charged them to amend their negligence without delay. "It is in vaine," the letter says, "for us to take knowledg of great abuses and disorders complayned of and to give order for redresse, if our directions finde no better execution and observation then it seemeth they do, and wee must needes impute the fault and blame thereof to yow or some of yow, the Justices of the Peace, that are put in trust to see them executed and perfourmed; whereof wee may give yow a plaine instance in the great abuse contynued or rather encreased in the multitude of plaie-howes and stage-plaies in and about the cittie of London. . . . Wee did carefullie sett downe and prescribe an order to be observed concerninge the number of play-howes and the use and exercise of stage-plaies, with lymytacion of tymes and places for the same, . . . and yet we have neither understode of any redresse made by yow, nor receaved any certificate at all of your proceedinges therein, which default or omission wee do now pray and require you forthwith to amende, and to cause our said former order to be putt duely in execution; and especiallie to call before you the owners of all the other play-howes, excepting the two howses in Middlesex and Surrey aforementioned, and to take good and sufficient bondes of them not to exercise, use or practise, nor to suffer from henceforth to be exercised, used or practized, any stage-playinge in their howses,



and, if they shall refuse to enter into such bondes, then to comitt them to prison untill they shall conforme themselves."

This remonstrance proved no more effective than the order to which it referred, and no further action appears to have been taken by the Privy Council until after the accession of James. In April, 1604, the Lords of the Council wrote a letter to the Lord Mayor of London and the magistrates of Middlesex and Surrey, in which, after alluding to the "good service in their quallitie of playinge" done by "the Kings Majesties Players," they say: "We thinke it therefore fitt, the time of Lent being now past, that your Lordship doe permitt and suffer the three companies of plaiers to the King, Queene and Prince, publicklye to exercise ther plaies in ther severall and usuall howses for that purpose and noe other; viz., the Globe scituate in Maiden Lane on the Bancks side in the countie of Surrey, the Fortune in Goldinge Lane, and the Curtaine in Hollywelle in the cowntie of Midlesex, without any lett or interruption in respect of any former Lettres of Prohibition heertofore written by us to your Lordship, except ther shall happen weeklye to die of the plague above the numbèr of thirtie within the Cittie of London and the Liberties therof, att which time wee thinke itt fitt they shall cease and forbear any further publicklye to playe untill the sicknes be again decreased to the saide number; and so we bid your Lordship hartilie farewell."

“The War of the Theatres,” as it has been called, deserves some notice in connection with the dramatic history of the closing years of the sixteenth century. The “war” was due to the quarrels of Marston and Dekker with Ben Jonson, and the record of it is mainly to be found in their plays written between 1598 and 1602. Other dramatists, including Shakespeare, have been supposed to be involved in it, but there is no satisfactory evidence that they were.

Marston’s Satires have generally been regarded as the first cause of the quarrel; but the critics do not agree as to the passages in which Jonson is supposed to be satirized. Some believe that Torquatus in the *Scourge of Villanie* (1598) was meant for Jonson; but this view is not supported by what Jonson himself says concerning the beginning of the quarrel. In the *Apologetical Dialogue* appended to *The Poetaster*, first printed in 1616, and stated to have been “only once spoken on the stage,” Jonson says:—

“But sure I am, three years  
They did provoke me with their petulant styles  
On every stage; and I at last, unwilling,  
But weary, I confess, of so much trouble,  
Thought I would try if shame could win upon ’em.”

In the *Conversations with Drummond*, we read: “He [Jonson] had many quarrels with Marston, beat him, and took his pistol from him, wrote his *Poetaster* on him; the beginning of them were that Marston rep-

resented him on the stage, in his youth given to venerie."

If, as these passages both assert, the quarrel arose from some *stage* representation, it could not have been the *Scourge of Villanie*, which was a satire in verse; and the internal evidence in the poem that Jonson is ridiculed is by no means decisive.

Whether Marston began the quarrel or not, it is clear that Jonson attacked him in *Every Man Out of His Humour* (acted in 1599), where certain peculiar words used by Marston in the *Scourge of Villanie* and *Histrionastix* are ridiculed, and the latter play is mentioned by name. Marston appears to have had a hand in *Histrionastix*, if he was not the sole author of it. The character of Chrisoganus in the play is quite certainly intended for Jonson; and Carlo Buffone in *Every Man Out of His Humour* is meant by Jonson for Marston.

Several plays by Dekker have been thought by critics to be connected with the quarrel between Jonson and Marston, and concerning *Satiromastix* (1601) at least there can be no doubt, as it is avowedly a reply to Ben's satirical comedies, especially to *The Poetaster*, in which Dekker is introduced as Demetrius, who is to write a play ridiculing Horace (Jonson).

*Cynthia's Revels* (1601) was written by Jonson to satirize the four men (probably Marston, Daniel, Lodge, and Munday) who had been ridiculed in *Every Man Out of His Humour*. *The Poetaster*,

however, is his only avowed reply to the attacks made upon him. It was first performed in 1601 by the Children of the Chapel, with whom Jonson had formed an alliance, and who had also rendered *Cynthia's Revels*.

The scene of *The Poetaster* is laid in Rome, in the time of Augustus, and Jonson appears as Horace. The "poetaster" is Crispinus (Marston) who has associated Demetrius (Dekker) with him "to abuse Horace and bring him in in a play." The most famous scene (v. 1) is that in which Horace administers an emetic pill to Crispinus, who, with Demetrius, has been condemned for attacking Horace. The scene is an adaptation of the *Lexiphanes* of Lucian, which Jonson often follows in both incidents and language. The pill compels Crispinus to disgorge the peculiar words that marked his style, and many of them have been identified in Marston's works. Demetrius is recommended for mercy by Horace; the "oath for good behaviour" is administered to both him and Crispinus, who swear that they will never again "malign, traduce, or detract the person or writings of Quintus Horatius Flaccus, or any other eminent man."

In this play Jonson, who had learned that Marston and Dekker were conspiring to attack him in *Satiromastix*, anticipated and answered the charges they intended to bring against him. So far as he was concerned, *The Poetaster* ended the "War of the Theatres," and peace soon followed. Marston

and Jonson are both contributors to Chester's *Loves Martyr* in 1601; and in 1604 they both collaborated with Chapman in writing *Eastward Ho*, in which allusions to the Scots offended King James and his friends, and sent all three dramatists to jail. In the same year (1604) Marston dedicated his *Malcontent* to "Benjamino Jonsonio, poetæ elegantissimo, gravissimo, amico suo, candido et cordato."

Some writers have assumed that the "war" was injurious to the interests of both dramatists and actors; but Jonson, in more than one passage, intimates that the plays to which it gave rise were profitable to the authors; and, if so, they must have been profitable to the actors as well. Jonson, in the *Apologetical Dialogue*, says:—

"Now for the players, it is true I taxed them,  
 And yet but some; and those so sparingly  
 As all the rest might have sat still unquestioned,  
 Had they but had the wit or conscience  
 To think well of themselves. But, impotent, they  
 Thought each man's vice belonged to their whole tribe;  
 And much good do't them! What they have done 'gainst  
     me,  
 I am not moved with: if it gave them meat,  
 Or got them clothes, 'tis well; that was their end.  
 Only amongst them, I am sorry for  
 Some better natures, by the rest so drawn  
 To run in that vile line."

The plays helped to get the authors meat and clothes, and this was their end in writing them.

Histrion says that the reason for hiring Demetrius to bring in Horace and his gallants in a play is "that it will get us a huge deal of money . . . and we have need on 't." "Of course," as Professor J. H. Penniman remarks, in his *War of the Theatres* (1897), "any profit to be derived from satirical plays could be gained by Jonson as well as by his opponents. Although he was several times involved in legal difficulties on account of his plays, and although the Elizabethan laws concerning libel and slander were severe, and the people of the time were litigious, yet we have no record of any legal action instituted by the playwrights against Jonson, or by Jonson against the playwrights. There was undoubtedly much bitterness of feeling on both sides, but, much as they hated each other, they sought no legal redress, for the almost libellous plays were a source of profit, and legal proceedings might have killed the goose that laid the golden eggs."

In the plays already mentioned as connected with the "War of the Theatres" there is no evidence worthy of serious consideration to show that Shakespeare was involved in the wordy conflict. It is improbable, indeed, that he would have been supposed to be one of the combatants except for a perplexing allusion to him in *The Return from Parnassus*, a play "publicly acted by the students in St. Johns Colledge, in Cambridge," as the title-page of the edition of 1606 informs us. This

performance at Cambridge was at Christmastide, 1601-2, and not improbably on the 1st of January, 1602.

The play must have been written after *The Poet-aster*, to which there is a direct allusion. In iv. 3, Kempe says to Burbage: "Few of the university pen plaies well, they smell too much of that writer *Ovid*, and that writer *Metamorphosis*, and talke too much of *Proserpina* and *Juppiter*. Why heres our fellow *Shakespeare* puts them all downe, I [ay] and *Ben Jonson* too. O that *Ben Jonson* is a pestilent fellow, he brought up *Horace* giving the Poets a pill, but our fellow *Shakespeare* hath given him a purge that made him beray his credit."

At first thought it is natural to suppose that the "purge" given by Shakespeare to Ben Jonson is a play; and the only play of Shakespeare's that can possibly be considered as meant is *Troilus and Cressida*, the date of which is put by some critics as early as 1601.

A play upon Shakespeare's name has been fancied to occur in *Histriomastix* in the following passage: —

"Thy knight his valiant elbow wears,  
That when he *shakes* his furious *speare*  
The foe in shivering fearful sort  
May lay him down in death to snort."

In Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* the line (i. 3. 73), "When rank Thersites opes his mastic jaws,"

has been supposed to contain in the word *mastic* an allusion to *Histrionmastix*, and Thersites has been suspected to represent Marston, while Ajax is Ben Jonson. Fleay declares that "hardly a word is spoken of or by Ajax in ii. 3 and iii. 3 which does not apply literally to Jonson; and in ii. 1 he beats Thersites of the 'mastic jaws' as Jonson 'beat Marston'" (*Conversations with Drummond*). Moreover, "Thersites in all respects resembles Marston, the railing satirist;" and the "purge" is from *Troilus and Cressida*, ii. 3. 223: "He will be the physician that should be the patient." In another passage Fleay says that "the setting up of Ajax as a rival to Achilles shadows forth the putting forward of Dekker by the King's men to write against Jonson his *Satiromastix*;" and in yet another passage he says that Dekker is Thersites in *Troilus and Cressida*. It will be seen that Fleay is not consistent with himself, as indeed he has often failed to be in discussing other dramatic questions. In the first passage, Ajax is Jonson, and Thersites is Marston; in the second, Ajax is Dekker and Achilles is Jonson; in the third, Thersites is Dekker. Gifford maintained that the "purge" was merely Shakespeare's great superiority to other playwrights; and Sidney Lee takes it to refer to the fact that "Shakespeare had signally outstripped Jonson in popular esteem;" adding that, "as the author of *Julius Cæsar*, he had just proved his command of topics that were peculiarly suited to



Jonson's vein, and had in fact outrun his churlish comrade on his own ground." Professor Penniman thinks that the "purge" must be "something more definite" than Gifford suggests, and was "presumably a play;" and Dr. Brinsley Nicholson supposes it to be some play of Shakespeare's that has not come down to us. Dr. Cartwright, in his *Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, Dramatic versus Wit Combats*, connects Shakespeare's *Much Ado, As You Like It, Timon of Athens*, and *Othello* with the quarrel. "Who can doubt that Iago is malignant Ben?" Fleay recognises Marston as Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, and Maria's "M. O. A. I." in the forged letter as "Jo. Ma. (John Marston)." "With the locking up of Crispinus in some dark place, compare the imprisonment of Malvolio." Verily, as Dowden says of certain wild theories concerning the *Sonnets*, "these be the pranks of Puck among the critics!"

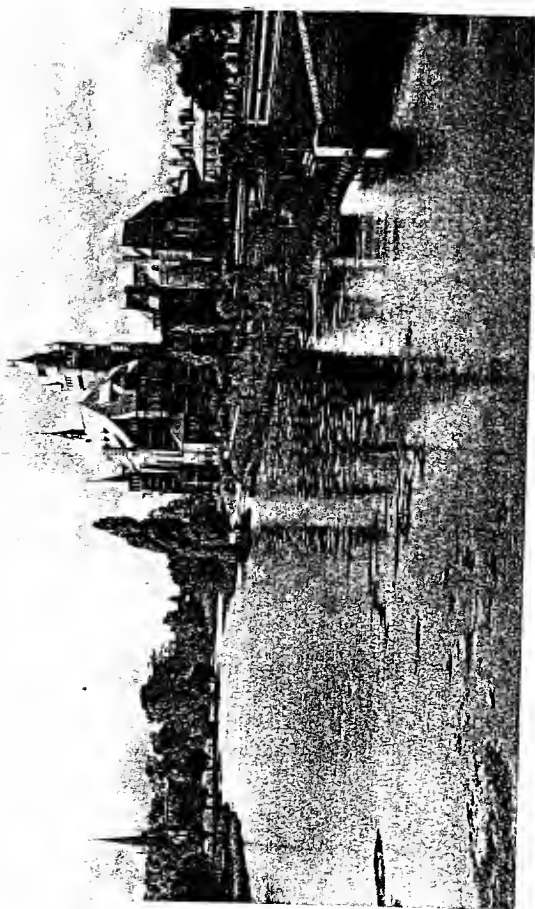
The simplest solution of the problem is, on the whole, the most satisfactory; and Sidney Lee is, to my thinking, substantially right, though it does not seem necessary to suspect a specific allusion to *Julius Cæsar*. The author of *The Return from Parnassus* makes simply a metaphorical reference to Ben Jonson's purgative pill, which was a disagreeable dose for his patients. Shakespeare gave Ben an equally unpalatable dose by outdoing him as a playwright and thus physicking his abounding self-conceit; and this treatment was wholly independent of Ben's

quarrel with his fellow dramatists, in which the "gentle Shakespeare" had no part whatsoever.

Shakespeare's company acted before Elizabeth at Richmond Palace on Twelfth Night and Shrove Sunday, 1600, and at Whitehall on the 26th of December. On March the 6th they were at Somerset House, and there performed, before Lord Hunsdon and some foreign ambassadors, another drama on the subject of Oldcastle. The Queen kept her Court at Whitehall in the Christmas of 1601-1602, and during the holidays four plays were exhibited before her by Shakespeare's company. They also acted at Richmond on Candlemas Day, February 2d, 1603, and this was the last occasion on which they could have appeared before Elizabeth, as she died on the 24th of March, 1603.

James arrived in London on May the 17th, 1603, and ten days afterwards he granted, by bill of Privy Signet, a license to Shakespeare and the other members of his company to perform in London and in the provinces. The royal license reads thus:—

"James, by the grace of God King of England, Scotland, Fraunce, and Irland, Defendor of the Faith, etc. to all justices, maiors, sheriffes, constables, headboroughes, and other our officers and loving subjects greeting. Know ye, that we of our speciall grace, certaine knowledge, and meere motion, have licenced and authorized, and by these presentes doe licence and authorize, these our servants, Lawrence Fletcher, William Shakespeare, Richard



By the water, 1885, by the lake, N. Y.



Burbage, Augustine Phillipps, John Hemmings, Henrie Condell, William Sly, Robert Armin, Richard Cowlye, and the rest of their associats, freely to use and exercise the arte and faculty of playing comedies, tragedies, histories, enterludes, moralls, pastorals, stage-plaies, and such other like, as thei have already studied, or hereafter shall use or studie, as well for the recreation of our loving subjects, as for our solace and pleasure, when we shall thinke good to see them, during our pleasure ; and the said comedies, trajedies, histories, enterludes, moralls, pastoralls, stage-plaies, and such like, to shew and exercise publicly to their best commoditie, when the infection of the plague shall decrease, as well within their now usuall howse called the Globe, within our county of Surrey, as also within anie towne halls, or mout halls, or other convenient places within the liberties and freedome of any other citie, universitie, towne, or borough whatsoever within our said realmes and dominions: willing and commaunding you, and every of you, as you tender our pleasure, not only to permit and suffer them heerin, without any your letts, hinderances, or molestations, during our said pleasure, but also to be ayding or assisting to them yf any wrong be to them offered; and to allowe them such former courtesies, as hathe bene given to men of their place and qualitie ; and also what further favour you shall shew to these our servants for our sake, we shall take kindly at your hands. And these our letters shall be your sufficient warrant and discharge in this behalfe. Given under our signet at our mannor of Grenewiche, the seavententh day of May in the first yeere of our raigne of England, Fraunce, and Irland, and of Scotland the six and thirtieth."

The King was staying in December, 1603, at Wilton, the seat of one of Shakespeare's patrons, William Herbert, third earl of Pembroke, and on the second of that month the company had the honour of performing before the distinguished party then assembled in that noble mansion. In the following Christmas holidays, 1603-1604, they were acting on several occasions at Hampton Court, the play selected for representation on the first evening of the new year being mentioned by one of the audience under the name of *Robin Goodfellow*, possibly a familiar title of the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*. Their services were again invoked by royalty at Candlemas and on Shrove Sunday, — on the former occasion at Hampton Court before the Florentine ambassador, and on the latter at Whitehall. At this time they were prohibited from acting in or near London because of the plague; and the King on that account made the company a present of thirty pounds.

On the 15th of March, 1604, James undertook his formal march from the Tower to Westminster, amid emphatic demonstrations of welcome, passing every now and then under the most elaborate triumphal arches London had ever seen. In the royal train were the nine actors to whom the special license had been granted the previous year, including of course Shakespeare and his three friends, Burbage, Hemmings, and Coudell. Each of them was presented with four yards and a half of scarlet cloth,

the usual dress-allowance to players belonging to the household. The poet and his colleagues, now termed the King's Servants, took rank at Court among the Grooms of the Chamber.

On the evening of Hallowmas Day, November 1st, 1604, "The Moor of Venice" (*Othello*) was played before the Court at Whitehall. Richard Burbage took the part of Othello. The Elegy on Burbage refers to him as unrivalled in the character of "the grieved Moor." In the Christmas holidays of 1604, *Measure for Measure* was played at Whitehall.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE SONNETS

OF all the perplexing problems concerning Shakespeare and his works none have been the subject of more speculation and controversy than the history and the interpretation of the *Sonnets*.

What we really know about the *Sonnets* can be stated in a few sentences. The earliest known reference to them is in the often-quoted list of the poet's plays and poems in the *Palladis Tamia* of Francis Meres, who calls them "his sugred Sonnets among his private friends" (see page 232 above). This was in 1598, and in the next year two of them (138 and 144) were printed in *The Passionate Pilgrim*.

In 1609 the entire collection was published, by Thomas Thorpe, with the following title-page:—

"SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS. Neuer before Imprinted. AT LONDON. By G. Eld for T. T. and to be solde by William Aspley. 1609."

In some copies the latter part of the imprint reads: "to be solde by *John Wright*, dwelling at Christ Church gate. 1609."

The dedication of the volume is as follows:—



**TO . THE . ONLIE . BEGETTER . OF .**  
**THESE . INSVING . SONNETS .**  
**Mr. W. H. ALL . HAPPINESSE .**  
**AND . THAT . ETERNITIE .**  
**PROMISED .**  
**BY .**  
**OVR . EVER-LIVING . POET .**  
**WISHETH .**  
**THE . WELL-WISHING .**  
**ADVENTVRER . IN .**  
**SETTING .**  
**FORTH .**

**T. T.**

At the end of the volume *A Lover's Complaint* was printed.

In 1640 the Sonnets (except Nos. 18, 19, 43, 56, 75, 76, 96, and 126), re-arranged under various titles, were reprinted, with the pieces in *The Passionate Pilgrim*, *A Lover's Complaint*, *The Phoenix* and *Turtle*, and other poems (see page 221 above), some of which are known to be Shakespeare's, while others are falsely ascribed to him.

There is an introductory address "To the Reader" by the publisher, in which he asserts that the poems are "of the same purity the Authour himselfe then living avouched," and that they will be found "seren, cleere and eligantly plaine." He adds that by bringing them "to the perfect view of all men" he is "glad to be serviceable for the continuance of glory to the deserved Author."

The order of the poems in this volume is followed in the editions of Gildon (1710) and of Sewell (1725 and 1728); also in those published by Ewing (1771) and Evans (1775). In all these editions the sonnets mentioned above (18, 19, etc.) are omitted, and 138 and 144 are given in the form in which they appear in *The Passionate Pilgrim*.

The first complete reprint of the *Sonnets*, after the edition of 1609, appears to have been in the collected edition of Shakespeare's Poems, published by Lintott in 1709.

So much for facts about which there is no dispute; and now for a few of the most important questions concerning the *Sonnets* over which editors, commentators, and critics have wrangled, and over some of which they will doubtless continue to wrangle to the last syllable of recorded time.

Was the edition of 1609 authorized or supervised by Shakespeare? Some editors have answered the question in the negative, but the reasons given for the decision are far from conclusive. The fact that the dedication is the publisher's, not the author's,

has, for instance, been cited; but there are those who tell us that the poet, for certain reasons, chose to hide behind Master Thorpe. Dowden, who summarizes the entire literature of the subject in the introduction to his larger edition of the *Sonnets*, says "there is reason to believe" that the edition of 1609 had "neither the superintendence nor the consent of the author;" but the only reason he gives for this opinion — and presumably the best he could offer — is that the book, "though not carelessly printed, is far less accurate than the *Venus and Adonis*." That poem and the *Lucrece* are the only works of Shakespeare that he himself appears to have seen through the press. Both are carefully printed for that day, and the *Lucrece* at least, as the variations in copies of the first edition clearly prove, was corrected by the author while on the press. Both, moreover, contain formal dedications signed with his name.

The 1609 edition of the *Sonnets*, on the other hand, abounds in errors of the type, most of which Shakespeare could not have failed to detect if he had supervised the printing. He was pretty certainly in London in 1609, and if he allowed these "sugred sonnets" to be printed at all, he would surely have seen that they were printed well.

The question, however, is definitely settled (as I was the first to point out) by one little peculiarity in the printing of the 126th Sonnet, if sonnet it may be called. It has only twelve lines, and Thorpe



Are the *Sonnets*, wholly or in part, autobiographical, or are they merely "poetical exercises" dealing with imaginary persons and experiences? This is the question to which all others relating to the poems are secondary and subordinate.

For myself, I firmly believe that the great majority of the Sonnets, to quote what Wordsworth says of them, "express Shakespeare's own feelings in his own person;" or, as he says in his sonnet on the sonnet, "with this same key Shakespeare unlocked his heart." Browning, quoting this, asks: "Did Shakespeare? If so, the less Shakespeare he!" to which Swinburne replies, "No whit the less like Shakespeare, but undoubtedly the less like Browning."

The theory that the *Sonnets* are mere exercises of fancy, "the free outcome of a poetic imagination," as Delius phrases it, is easy and specious at first, but lands us at last among worse perplexities than it evades. That Shakespeare, for example, should write seventeen sonnets urging a young man to marry and perpetuate his family is strange enough, but that he should select such a theme as the fictitious basis for seventeen sonnets is stranger yet; and the same may be said of the story or stories underlying other of the poems. Some critics, indeed, who take them to be thus artificially inspired, have been compelled to regard them as "satirical" — intended to ridicule the sonneteers of the period, especially Drayton and

John Davies of Hereford. Others, like Professor Minto, who believe the first 126 to be personal, regard the rest as "exercises of skill, undertaken in a spirit of wanton defiance and derision of commonplace." The poems, to quote Dowden, "are in the taste of the time; less extravagant and less full of conceits than many other Elizabethan collections, more distinguished by exquisite imagination and all that betokens genuine feeling; they are, as far as manner goes, such sonnets as Daniel might have chosen to write if he had had the imagination and the heart of Shakespeare. All that is quaint or contorted or 'conceited' in them can be paralleled from passages of early plays of Shakespeare, such as *Romeo and Juliet*, and the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, where assuredly no satirical intention is discoverable."

If the *Sonnets* were mostly written before 1598 when Meres refers to them, or 1599 when Jaggard printed two of them, or in 1593 and 1594, as Sidney Lee assumes, and if most of them, as the same critic believes, were "little more than professional trials of skill, often of superlative merit, to which the poet deemed himself challenged by the efforts of contemporary practitioners," it is passing strange that Shakespeare should not have published them ten or fifteen years before they were brought out by the pirate Thorpe. He must have written them for publication if that was their character, and the extraordinary popularity of his earlier poems would

have ensured them a favourable reception with the public. His fellow-townsmen and friend, Richard Field, who had published the *Venus and Adonis* in 1593 and the *Lucrece* in 1594, and who must have known of the circulation of the sonnets in manuscript, would have urged him to publish them; or, if the author had declined to let them be printed, some pirate, like Jaggard or Thorpe, would have done it long before 1609. Mr. Lee tells us that Sidney, Watson, Daniel, and Constable circulated their sonnets for some time in manuscript, but he tells us also that the pirates generally got hold of them and published them within a few years if the authors did not do it. But the history of *The Passionate Pilgrim* shows that it was not so easy to obtain copies of Shakespeare's sonnets for publication. It was the success of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* (the fourth edition of the former being issued in 1599 and the second of the latter in 1598) which prompted Jaggard to compile *The Passionate Pilgrim* in 1599; and it is a significant fact that he was able to rake together only ten poems which can possibly be Shakespeare's, and three of these were from *Love's Labour's Lost*, which had been published in 1598. To these ten pieces he added ten others (eleven, as ordinarily printed) which he impudently called Shakespeare's, though we know that most of them were stolen and can trace some of them to their authors. His book bears evidence in its very make-up that he was hard pushed to fill

the pages and give the purchaser a tolerable sixpence-worth. The matter is printed on but one side of the leaf, and is further spun out by putting a head-piece and tail-piece on every page, so that a dozen lines of text sandwiched between these convenient pictorial devices may make as fair a show as double the quantity would ordinarily present.

Note, however, that, with all his pickings and stealings, Jaggard managed to secure but two of the sonnets, though more than a hundred of them were probably in existence among the author's "private friends," as Meres expressed it a year before. The pirate Newman, in 1591, was able to print one hundred and eight sonnets by Sidney which had been circulated in manuscript, and to add to them twenty-eight by Daniel without the author's knowledge; and other similar instances are mentioned by Mr. Lee. How, then, are we to explain the fact that Jaggard could obtain only two of Shakespeare's sonnets, five years or more after they had been circulating among his friends? Is it not evident that the poems must have been carefully guarded by these friends on account of their personal and private character? A dozen more of those sonnets would have filled out Jaggard's "larcenous bundle of verse," and have obviated the necessity of pilfering from Barnfield, Griffin, Marlowe, and the rest; but at the time they were in such close confidential keeping that he could get no copies of them. In the course of years they were shown to a larger and



larger number of "private friends," and with the multiplication of copies the chances of their getting outside of that confidential circle were proportionally increased. We need not be surprised, then, that a decade later somebody had succeeded in obtaining copies of them all, and sold the collection to Thorpe.

Even if we suppose that the sonnets had been impersonal, and that Shakespeare for some reason that we cannot guess had wished to withhold them from the press, we may be sure that he could not have done it in that day of imperfect copyright restrictions. Nothing could have kept a hundred and fifty poems by so popular an author out of print if there had not been strong personal reasons for maintaining their privacy. At least seven editions of the *Venus and Adonis* and four of the *Lucrece* appeared before Thorpe was able to secure "copy" for his edition of the *Sonnets*.

If, as Mr. Lee asserts, Southampton was the "patron" to whom twenty of the sonnets which may be called "dedicatory" sonnets (23, 26, 32, 37, 38, 69, 77-86, 100, 101, 103, and 106) are addressed, it is all the more remarkable that Shakespeare should not have published them, or, if he hesitated to do it, that his noble patron should not have urged it. He had already dedicated both the *Venus and Adonis* and the *Lucrece* to Southampton; and Mr. Lee says that "three of the twenty dedicatory sonnets [26, 32, 38] merely translate into the

language of poetry the expressions of devotion which had already done duty in the dedicatory epistle in verse that precedes *Lucrece*." Other sonnet-sequences of the time (including the four mentioned by Mr. Lee as pirated while circulated in manuscript, except Sidney's, which were not thus published until after his death) were brought out by their authors, with dedications to noble lords or ladies. Shakespeare's sonnets, so far as I am aware, are the only exception to the rule.

Mr. Lee himself admits that "at a first glance a far larger proportion of Shakespeare's sonnets give the reader the illusion of personal confessions than those of any contemporary;" and elsewhere he recognizes in them more "intensity" than appears in the earlier poems except in "occasional utterances" of *Lucrece*; but, for all that, he would have us believe that they are not personal, and that their "superior and more evenly sustained energy is to be attributed, not to the accession of power that comes with increase of years, but to the innate principles of the poetic form, and to metrical exigencies which impelled the sonneteer to aim at a uniform condensation of thought and language." I cannot help agreeing with those who regard their personal character as no "illusion," and who believe that they clearly show the increase of power which comes with years, their true date probably being 1597-98 rather than 1593-94.

For myself, I could as soon believe the peniten-

tial psalms of David to be purely rhetorical and fictitious as the 129th sonnet, than which no more remorseful utterance was ever wrung from a soul that had tasted the ashes to which the Sodom-apples of illicit love are turned in the end. Have we there nothing but the "admirable fooling" of the actor masquerading in the garb of the penitent, or the satirist mimicking the conceits and affectations of the sonnetéers of the time? If this is supposed to be the counterfeit of feeling, I can only exclaim with Leonato in *Much Ado*, "O God! counterfeit! There was never counterfeit of passion came so near the life of passion!"

To whom is the Dedication addressed, and what does it mean?

If Shakespeare had nothing to do with Thorpe's venture, the dedication is Thorpe's own, as it purports to be. But in what sense was "Mr. W. H.," whoever he may have been, "the onlie begetter" of the *Sonnets*? "Begetter" may mean either the person to whom the poems owed their birth and to whom they were originally addressed, or the one who collected and arranged them for Thorpe. The majority of critics take the word in the former and more familiar sense, while the minority cite examples of the other meaning from writers of the time, and argue plausibly for its adoption here. Both explanations have their difficulties, but the first seems on the whole the more probable. The choice between them does not of necessity affect

the opinions we may form concerning the origin, the order, or the significance of the *Sonnets*. Who "Mr. W. H." was critics will probably never agree in deciding; but if he was not the editor of the book of 1609, it had an editor about whom we know with certainty neither more nor less than we know about "Mr. W. H." .

The vital question concerning the unknown editor is whether he was in the confidence of either the writer of the sonnets or the person or persons to or for whom they were written. If he was not, his arrangement of the poems is not an authoritative one; and that he was not is evident from the fact that he did not, and presumably could not, ask either the author or the addressee of the 126th Sonnet for that supposed lost couplet. Neither author nor addressee could have been privy to the publication of the poems, and neither would have assisted the piratical editor or publisher in arranging them for the press.

Dr. Furnivall, in a private note, says he has no doubt that the insertion of the marks of parenthesis "was the printer's doings;" and Mr. Thomas Tyler, in his edition of the *Sonnets* (London, 1890), expresses the same opinion; but it is extremely improbable that the printer would resort to this extraordinary typographical expedient (absolutely unprecedented, so far as my observation goes) without consulting the publisher, and Thorpe would not have consented to it if he could have avoided it. It is clear that

printer or publisher, or both, considered that something was evidently wanting which could not be supplied and must be accounted for.

Dr. Furnivall also says that our "editor" is "an imaginary being." He is in no wise essential to the theory. If anybody chooses to regard Thorpe as his own editor, be it so. Whether he arranged the poems as we find them in his edition or somebody else arranged them for him does not matter. Whichever it may have been, he simply did the work as well as he could from what he knew of the history of the poems or could learn from a study of them. He seems to have discovered enough about their origin and their meaning to enable him to get them nearly in their proper order; but it is not improbable that, if Shakespeare had read the proof-sheets, he might have made some transpositions.

The editor, as we will call him, though not in the confidence of the persons directly concerned, had evidently become deeply interested in the poems, and spent much time and labour in making a collection of them. In the course of the ten years or more previous to 1609, he had gathered in the 154, which he sorted and arranged for publication. Those urging a friend to marry were easily picked out; and this group of seventeen, as the largest — or, perhaps, as that in which the connection would be most obvious to the average reader — he placed first. As to the arrangement of the other groups he had made, he doubtless had his own theory, based, we

may suppose, on facts better known or more accessible than than now; but he had not all the information he needed for doing the work with absolute accuracy. After arranging the first 126, or all that he regarded as addressed to "Mr. W. H." or the poet's male friend, he appended those written to the "dark lady," as he supposed — apparently without any attempt at regular order, except in a few small groups readily made up — and, having added the two Cupid sonnets, handed the whole collection to Thorpe for printing.

It is hardly possible that certain of the sonnets in the second group (127–152) were really addressed to the "dark lady" — 129, for instance, though it may have been suggested by his relations with her; and 146, which seems to be entirely independent of that entanglement.

It is also very doubtful whether certain sonnets in the first group (1–126) properly belong there. Some of them appear to have been addressed to a woman rather than a man — for instance, 97, 98, 99, etc. Of course everybody familiar with the literature of that time knows, as Dyce remarks, that "it was then not uncommon for one man to write verses to another in a strain of such tender affection as fully warrants us in terming them amatory." Many of Shakespeare's sonnets which he addressed to his young friend are of this character, and were it not for internal evidence to the contrary might be supposed to be addressed to a woman. But Sonnets 97,

98, and 99 could hardly have been written to a male friend even in that day. Look at 99, for example: —

“ The forward violet thus did I chide :  
Sweet thief, whence didst thou steal thy sweet that  
smells,

If not from my love's breath? The purple pride  
Which on thy soft cheek for complexion dwells  
In my love's veins thou hast too grossly dyed.  
The lily I condemned for thy hand,  
And buds of marjoram had stolen thy hair ;  
The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,  
One blushing shame, another white despair ;  
A third, nor red nor white, had stolen of both,  
And to his robbery had annex'd thy breath ;  
But, for his theft, in pride of all his growth  
A vengeful canker eat him up to death.

More flowers I noted, yet I none could see  
But sweet or colour it had stolen from thee.”

If this sonnet were met with where we had no external evidence that it was addressed to a man, could we have a moment's hesitation in deciding that it must be addressed to a woman? Even in Elizabethan times when extravagant eulogies of manly beauty were so common, do we find the poet dwelling upon his “love's breath” or the “lily” whiteness of his hand? From first to last, the sweetness and loveliness described in the verses are unmistakably feminine. There are other sonnets in this group which may or may not belong in it; there is no internal evidence to settle the question. Our

editor gave them the benefit of the doubt, and put them in; but he had no better authority for doing so than any of his successors.

Moreover, certain sonnets in the first group appear to be out of place, though many of the editors attempt to prove that the *order* of the series is Shakespeare's own. But if the 70th Sonnet is addressed to the same person as 33-35 (to say nothing of 40-42) it seems to be clearly out of place. Here the poet says:—

“That thou art blamed shall not be thy defect,  
 For slander's mark was ever yet the fair;  
 The ornament of beauty is suspect,  
 A crow that flies in heaven's sweetest air.  
 So thou be good, slander doth but approve  
 Thy worth the greater, being woo'd of time;  
 For canker vice the sweetest buds doth love,  
 And thou present'st a pure unstained prime.  
 Thou hast pass'd by the ambush of young days,  
 Either not assail'd or victor being charged;  
 Yet this thy praise cannot be so thy praise,  
 To tie up envy evermore enlarged.”

His friend has been charged with yielding to the seductions of vice, but the accusations are declared to be false and slanderous. He is said to present “a pure unstained prime,” having passed through the temptations of youth either “not assailed” by them or “victor being charged;” but in 33-35 we learn that he *has been* assailed and has *not* come



off victorious. There the "stain" and "disgrace" of his "sensual fault" are clearly set forth, though they are excused and forgiven. Here the young man is the victim of slander, but has in no wise deserved it. If he is the same young man who is so plainly, though sadly and tenderly, reproved in 33-35, this sonnet must have been written before those. One broken link spoils the chain; if the order of the poems is wrong here, it may be so elsewhere.

Mr. Tyler's attempt to show that this sonnet is not out of place is a good illustration of the "tricks of desperation" to which a critic may be driven in defence of his theory: "Slander ever fastens on the purest characters. His friend's prime was unstained, such an affair as that with the poet's mistress not being regarded, apparently, as involving serious moral blemish. Moreover, there had been forgiveness; and the special reference here may be to some charge of which Mr. W. H. was innocent." Whatever this charge may be, the "pure unstained prime" covers the period referred to in Sonnets 33-35 and 40-42; and the young man's conduct then appeared a "trespass" and a "sin," a "shame" and a "disgrace," to the friend who now, according to Mr. Tyler, sees no "serious moral blemish" in it. Let the reader compare the poems for himself, and draw his own conclusions. Mr. Tyler has the grace to add to what is quoted above: "But (as in 79) Shakespeare can scarcely escape the charge of adulation." Rather

than believe William Shakespeare guilty of "adulation" so ineffably base and sycophantic, I could suppose, as some do, that Bacon wrote the *Sonnets*.

Both Furnivall and Dowden, in their exposition of the relation of each sonnet to the story involved in the series, fail to explain this 70th Sonnet satisfactorily. Furnivall's comment, in his analysis of Sonnets 67-70, is this: "Will has mixed with bad company, but Shakespeare is sure he is pure, and excuses him." At this stage of the friendship, then, Shakespeare is "sure" that the young man is "pure;" but in the analysis of Sonnets 33-35, we read: "Will's sensual fault blamed, repented, and forgiven;" and this "fault," as the context explains, is taking away Shakespeare's mistress. There can be no doubt as to the fact and the nature of the sin mourned and condemned in the earlier sonnets; nor can there be any question that the later sonnet congratulates the youth to whom it is addressed, not on having repented after yielding to temptation, but on having either escaped or resisted all such temptations. If this youth and the other youth are one and the same, the sonnets cannot be in chronological order.

Dowden, in like manner, infers from the earlier sonnets that "Will" has been "false to friendship," and that the only excuse that Shakespeare can offer for him is that "he is but a boy whom a woman has beguiled;" but in the 70th Sonnet the poet says that the charges of loose living brought

against his friend "must be slanders." Dowden cannot mean that this sonnet is a friendly attempt to apologize for Will's disgrace after the poet has forgiven him. We have that in Sonnets 35, 36, 40, 41, and 42, where Elizabethan conceits are racked to the uttermost to excuse both his friend and his mistress for playing him false; but, in 70 his friend is "pure," though he cannot escape slander, "unstained," though envy would fain besmirch him.

Mr. Gollancz, in the "Temple" edition of the *Sonnets*, after quoting what I say in my edition (as here) to prove that 70 is out of place, simply repeats Tyler's attempt to prove the contrary. "Surely," he says, "the faults referred to in the earlier sonnets are not only forgiven, but here [in 70] imputed to slander." This is an evasion of my argument. That the sin was forgiven is obvious; but the later sonnet says that the sin was never committed, and it therefore needed no forgiveness. How lightly such lapses were regarded in the olden time we all know; but in this case the treason to friendship was added, and the earlier sonnets show that Shakespeare did not regard the double sin as "involving no serious moral blemish."

The critics who believe the *Sonnets* to be autobiographical generally agree in assuming that all of them (or all but two) are either addressed to one man and one woman, or connected with the poet's relations with those two persons. Is it not prob-

able, on the face of it, that a poet who "unlocked his heart" to such an extent in this form of verse would occasionally, if not often, have employed it in expressing his feelings towards other friends or with reference to other experiences? Is it likely that the two Cupid sonnets (153, 154) and the Venus and Adonis sonnets in *The Passionate Pilgrim* (if we believe those to be Shakespeare's — which is extremely improbable) and the sonnets in *Love's Labour's Lost* are his only efforts in this kind of composition outside of this great series? Is it not far more probable that some sonnets in this series really have no connection with the persons and events supposed to be directly connected with the series?

If we assume that the *Sonnets* are autobiographical, and that all, or nearly all, are addressed to two persons — a young man beloved of the poet, and the "dark lady," with whom they were both entangled — can these persons be identified? The majority of the critics who accept the personal theory assume that the "Mr. W. H." of the dedication was this young man, rather than the collector or editor of the poems.

The only theories concerning the young man (whether "Mr. W. H." or not) that are worthy of serious consideration are that he was William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, or that he was Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton.

As early as 1819 Mr. B. H. Bright suggested

that Herbert was the man, and this theory has steadily gained favour with biographers and critics. The editor of the "Temple" edition, who accepts the Southampton theory, writing a few years ago, believed that the Herbert theory was "in the ascendant." He added: "Many a former ally of Southampton has rallied round the banner unfurled by Herbert's redoubtable champion, Mr. Thomas Tyler." But more recently (in 1897) Sidney Lee, who had been on the side of Herbert, has now (in his article on Shakespeare in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and in his *Life of Shakespeare*) gone over to the Southampton party; and Mrs. Stopes and one or two other recent writers have also joined that faction.

William Herbert was born April 8th, 1580; and in the spring of 1598 he came to reside in London. He was brilliant, accomplished, and licentious; "the most universally beloved and esteemed of any man in London" (Clarendon). To him and his brother Philip, Earl of Montgomery, as two patrons of the dramatist, Hemings and Condell dedicated the folio of 1623. The "Herbertists" assign the *Sonnets* to the years 1597-1601. The most serious objection to regarding him as "Mr. W. H." (or the person addressed in the *Sonnets*) was the improbability that the poet would write seventeen sonnets to urge a youth of seventeen or eighteen to marry; but Mr. Tyler discovered, from letters preserved in the Record Office, that in 1597 the parents of Will-

iam Herbert were engaged in negotiations for his marriage to Bridget Vere, daughter of the Earl of Oxford. The course of the parental match-making ran smooth for a while, but was soon checked by obstacles not clearly explained in the correspondence. Shakespeare may have written the seventeen sonnets at the request of Herbert's mother, the Countess of Pembroke.

It is a curious fact that Grant White, in his first edition of Shakespeare (1865) had said of Sonnets 1-17: "There seems to be no imaginable reason for seventeen such poetical petitions. But that a mother should be thus solicitous is not strange, or that she should long to see the beautiful children of her own beautiful offspring. The desire for grandchildren, and the love of them, seem sometimes even stronger than parental yearning. But I hazard this conjecture with little confidence."

Mr. Tyler also attempted to prove that the "dark lady" was Mary Fitton, maid of honour to Queen Elizabeth, and mistress of Herbert, by whom she had a child in 1601. The Queen could not overlook the offence, and sent the father to the Fleet Prison. He was soon released, but appears never to have regained the royal favour.

There is no direct evidence to connect Shakespeare with Mistress Fitton; but we find that she was on somewhat intimate terms with a member of his theatrical company, that is, the Lord Chamberlain's Company, and was probably acquainted with

other members of it. In 1600 William Kemp, the clown in the company, dedicated his *Nine daies wonder* to "Mistris Anne Fitton, Mayde of Honour to most sacred Mayde, Royal Queene Elizabeth." As Elizabeth certainly had no maid of honour named *Anne* Fitton in 1600, while *Mary* Fitton held such office from 1595 to 1601, either Kemp or his printer probably made a mistake in the lady's Christian name in the dedication. As Mr. Tyler suggests, the form "Marie" might be so written as to be easily mistaken for "Anne." Mary had a sister Anne, who was married to John Newdigate on the 30th of April, 1587, and who could not, therefore, have been maid of honour in 1600.

A statue of Mary Fitton exists as a part of the family monument in Gawsworth Church, Cheshire; and the remnants of colour upon it were thought by Mr. Tyler (as by others who have seen it) to indicate that she was of dark complexion, with black hair and eyes, like the lady of the second series of the *Sonnets*. But Lady Newdigate-Newdegate (*Gossip from a Muniment Room*, 1598) states that two portraits of Mary represent her as of fair complexion, with brown hair and gray eyes.

It is a point in favour of the Herbert theory that Sonnets 135, 136, and 143 indicate that the person to whom the poems in the other series were addressed was called "Will;" but Mr. Lee considers that "Will" in these sonnets is only a play on

Shakespeare's own name and the lady's "will." It is true that such quibbles on "Will" are found elsewhere in his works, but it is doubtful whether any one but a Southamptonite would see them in these Sonnets.

Henry Wriothesley was born October 6th, 1573. As we have seen, the *Venus and Adonis* and the *Lucrece* were both dedicated to him, and tradition says that he was a generous patron of the poet (see page 296). In September, 1595, he fell in love with Elizabeth Vernon, a cousin of the Earl of Essex. This lost him the favour of the Queen, and involved him in serious troubles. In 1598 he secretly married Elizabeth Vernon. On account of his connection with the rebellion of Essex he was condemned to death, but the sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life. He was pardoned in 1603 when James came to the throne, and the 107th Sonnet is supposed by Mr. Gerald Massey to be Shakespeare's congratulation upon his release from prison and restoration to royal favour. The initials in "Mr. W. H.," according to some of the Southamptonites, are those of Henry Wriothesley transposed as a "blind."

When Southampton was seventeen (1590) he was urged by Burghley to marry his granddaughter, Lady Elizabeth Vere, a daughter of the Earl of Oxford, but the youth declined the alliance. If the *Sonnets* were addressed to him, the first seventeen could hardly have been written at this time, but the



efforts of his friends to find him a wife continued for several years afterwards.

While Mr. Lee believes that such of the sonnets as are personal in their character are addressed to Southampton, he does not understand that nobleman to be the "Mr. W. H." of the dedication. He says: "No peer of the day bore a name that could be represented by the initials 'Mr. W. H.'. . . The Earl of Pembroke was, from his birth to the date of his succession to the earldom in 1601, known by the courtesy title of Lord Herbert, and by no other name, and he could not have been designated at any period of his life by the symbols 'Mr. W. H.'" This may be admitted, but it does not prove that the "Mr. W. H." of the dedication was not *meant* to refer ambiguously to him. If Thorpe knew the history of the *Sonnets*, and that both the author and the person to whom they were addressed did not wish to have them printed, he certainly would not venture to inscribe the book in distinct terms to the Earl of Pembroke; but he might be inclined to give an indirect hint to those who were acquainted with the story underlying the poems that he also knew of the Earl's connection with it. He could do this with perfect safety by using the initials "W. H." which, as Mr. Lee elsewhere remarks, were common to many names, and which therefore could not be *proved* to be meant to suggest "William Herbert."

But after all it matters little whether "W. H." was meant for "William Herbert" or "Henry Wri-

othesley," so far as either the Herbert or Southampton theory is concerned. In either case they might refer to the "begetter" of the poems as the collector or editor, though the other interpretation of "begetter" seems to accord better with the rest of the dedication. Mr. Lee thinks that Mr. W. H. is "best identified with a stationer's assistant, William Hall, who was professionally engaged, like Thorpe, in procuring 'copy,'" and who, in 1606, "won a conspicuous success in that direction, and conducted his operations under cover of the familiar initials." Thorpe "gave Hall's initials only because he was an intimate associate who was known by those initials to their common circle of friends." But, though Thorpe was "bombastic" in his dedications, and might wish to Hall "all happiness" and even "eternitie," it is unlikely that he would wish him that "eternitie promised by our ever-living poet." Promised to whom? Mr. Lee refers it to the eternity that Shakespeare in the sonnets "conventionally foretold for his own verse;" but this interpretation is a desperate attempt to force the expression into consistency with his theory. The words plainly mean "promised in the sonnets to the person to whom they are addressed." This promise is far more prominent in the sonnets than that of their own immortality, which, indeed, is made dependent on the enduring fame of the youth who is their theme and inspirer.

If it were proved beyond a doubt that "Mr. W.

H." was William Hall or some other person who secured the sonnets for Thorpe, I should none the less believe that Herbert rather than Southampton was their "patron" and subject. The only facts worth mentioning in favour of Southampton are that the earlier poems were dedicated to him, and that certain personal allusions in the sonnets can be made to refer to him if we suppose them to have been written some four years before their more probable date. But Mr. Lee himself admits that these allusions are equally applicable to Herbert. "Both," he says, "enjoyed wealth and rank, both were regarded by admirers as cultivated, both were self-indulgent in their relations with women, and both in early manhood were indisposed to marry, owing to habits of gallantry." It may be added that both were noted for personal beauty, though Mr. Lee thinks that Francis Davison's reference to the beauty of Herbert in a sonnet addressed to him in 1602 is "cautiously qualified" in the lines: —

"[His] outward shape, though it most lovely be,  
Doth in fair robes a fairer soul attire."

Anybody who had not a theory to defend would see that the eulogy of the "fairer soul" enhances instead of "qualifying" the compliment to the "most lovely" person. This is a good illustration of Mr. Lee's perverse twisting of quotations for the purposes of his argument. He even finds a reference to Southampton's long hair (shown in his portrait)

in the 68th Sonnet, where Shakespeare "points to the youth's face as a map of what beauty was 'without all ornament, itself and true,' before fashion sanctioned the use of artificial 'golden tresses'" — though this is only one out of several illustrations of the poet's antipathy to false hair. See *Love's Labour's Lost*, iv. 3. 258; *Merchant of Venice*, iii. 2. 95; and *Timon of Athens*, iv. 3. 144.

One of the most serious objections to the Southampton theory is the necessity which it involves of fixing the date of the poems as early as 1592 or 1593. As we have seen (page 192), that period of Shakespeare's career is so crowded with work, dramatic and poetic, that it is quite impossible to add anything more to it.

There are difficulties, it is true, according to some of the critics, in fixing the date of the *Sonnets* as required by the Herbert theory. The earliest of them cannot be supposed to have been written before 1597, when Herbert's friends desired that he should marry Bridget Vere; and it has been assumed that the rest, or the great majority of them, must have been written before Jaggard printed the 144th Sonnet in 1599, because, it is said, that sonnet proves that the intrigue with the "dark lady" had come to an end. But, though no critic appears to have pointed it out, this is clearly a misinterpretation of that sonnet, which, instead of marking the end of the story, really belongs to a comparatively early stage of it. The sonnet, which it is well to

quote here in order to bring it directly before the eye of the reader, is as follows:—

“Two loves I have of comfort and despair,  
Which like two spirits do suggest me still ;  
The better angel is a man right fair,  
The worser spirit a woman colour'd ill.  
To win me soon to hell, my female evil  
Tempteth my better angel from my side,  
And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,  
Wooing his purity with her foul pride.  
And whether that my angel be turn'd fiend  
Suspect I may, yet not directly tell ;  
But being both from me, both to each friend,  
I guess one angel in another's hell :  
Yet this shall I ne'er know, but live in doubt,  
Till my bad angel fire my good one out.”

This certainly refers to the period indicated in Sonnets 33–35, at the latest. The poet says that the woman “tempteth” (not, has succeeded in seducing) his friend. She “would corrupt” him, but whether she has actually done it, he adds, “*Suspect I may, yet not directly tell,*” and “*I guess one angel in another's hell;*” but he does not “know” this, and will “live in doubt” until the affair comes to an end. But in Sonnets 34 and 35 he had no doubt that the “woman coloured ill” had corrupted his “better angel.” He endeavours to excuse the “sensual fault” of his friend; but in the next sonnet he decides that

“ We two must be twain,  
Although our undivided loves are one.”

They cannot wholly cease to love each other, but “a separable spite” (“a cruel fate that spitefully separates us from each other,” as Malone paraphrases it) must put an end to their friendly intercourse. In Sonnets 40-42 he recurs to the “robbery” his friend has committed; and laments, not only the loss of his mistress, but that of his friend: —

“ That thou hast her, it is not all my grief,  
And yet it may be said I loved her dearly;  
That she hath thee, is of my wailing chief,  
A loss in love that touches me more nearly.”

Is it not evident that Sonnet 144, with its suspicions and doubts and guesses, was written before rather than after 33-35 and 40-42, where the same facts are treated *as* facts well established, and thoroughly recognized as such by all the parties interested?

It is not necessary, then, to assume that all or most of the *Sonnets* were written before 1599, when *The Passionate Pilgrim* was published. Perhaps not more than half of the whole number were then in existence; and this may be one of the reasons why Jaggard was unable to get more of them for his six-penny booklet. It would be easier to keep thirty out of his reach among the poet's “private friends”

than a hundred and fifty; and Meres may not have had even as many as thirty in mind when he referred to the "sugred sonnets," in 1598. The others may have been scattered through several years after 1599; and some of those which seem independent of the regular series may have been written only a few years before the whole collection was published in 1609.

Mr. Lee dates some of the sonnets much later than 1593-94. He believes, for instance, with Mr. Gerald Massey (page 352), that the 107th was written in 1603, and refers to the death of Elizabeth and the release of Southampton from prison on the accession of James. "The mortal moon" of the sonnet is Elizabeth, whose "recognized poetic appellation" was Cynthia (the moon); and her death is more than once described as an eclipse. But the sonnet tells us that the moon "hath her eclipse endured" and come out none the less bright—which could hardly refer to death; and the supposed allusion to the imprisonment of the poet's friend is extremely fanciful.

It may be added that Shakespeare's references to himself in the *Sonnets* as "old" appear to have a bearing on their date, and thus upon the question whether Herbert or Southampton was the person addressed. Thirty or more of them were written before 1599, when the poet was thirty-five years old, and the first seventeen appear to have been written in 1597, when he was only thirty-three;

but in the 22d, which seems to be one of the earlier ones, he intimates that he is already old : —

“ My glass shall not persuade me I am old,  
So long as youth and thou are of one date ; ”

but in the preceding sonnets he has repeatedly admonished his young friend that the summer of youth is fast flying, and has urged this as a reason why he should marry ; “ for,” he says in substance, “ you will soon be old, as I am.” In the 73d we have a most beautiful and pathetic description of his own autumnal age : —

“ That time of year thou mayst in me behold  
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang  
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.  
In me thou seest the twilight of such day  
As after sunset fadeth in the west,  
Which by and by black night doth take away,  
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.  
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire  
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,  
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,  
Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.

This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,  
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.”

In the 138th, which was published in 1599, he refers to himself as “ old ” and his days as “ past the best.” We are told that here, as in some of the earlier sonnets, he is comparing himself, as a



mature and experienced man, with a green youth of perhaps twenty. Thus in the 62d Sonnet, after referring to his own face as he sees it in the glass, "Bated and chopp'd with tann'd antiquity," he adds that he comforts himself by "Painting my age with beauty of thy days." But in the 73d there is no contrast of his own age with that of his young friend, but a long-drawn and apparently heartfelt lament that his life has fallen into the sere and yellow leaf. Mr. Lee says that this "occasional reference to his growing age was a conventional device — traceable to Petrarch — of all sonneteers of the day, and admits of no literal interpretation." If the *Sonnets* were of the ordinary conventional Elizabethan type, poetical exercises on fictitious themes, we might regard the "growing age" as equally fictitious; but William Shakespeare, at thirty-one or thirty-two (as Mr. Lee imagines him to have been when he wrote these sonnets), or even at thirty-five, was not the man to indulge in such sentimental foolery — least of all through an entire sonnet — when dealing with real experiences like those that form the basis of these poems.

However that may be, a man of twenty-eight or twenty-nine (as Shakespeare was in 1592 or 1593) writing to one of nineteen or twenty (as Southampton was in those years) would be less likely to assume that fictitiously exaggerated age than a man of thirty-four or thirty-five writing to a youth of eighteen or nineteen.

Among the minor questions relating to the *Sonnets* which have been the subject of no little controversy the only one that seems to claim notice here is the identity of the "rival poet" of Sonnets 79-86. Spenser, Marlowe, Drayton, Nash, Daniel, and others have been suggested by the critics, and Mr. Lee adds Barnabe Barnes, "a poetic panegyrist of Southampton and a prolific sonneteer, who was deemed by contemporary critics certain to prove a great poet." On the whole, Chapman, whom Professor Minto was the first to suggest, and whom Dowden, Furnivall, and many others have endorsed, is most likely to have been the poet whom Shakespeare had in mind. Mr. Lee, having dated the *Sonnets* in 1592 and 1593, naturally objects that Chapman had produced no conspicuously "great verse" until 1598, and that we find no complimentary sonnet addressed by him to Southampton until 1610; but he had published poetry before 1598, and that date is early enough for the Herbert theory, in which, of course, the failure to praise Southampton does not count. The question, nevertheless, is one that cannot be definitely settled.

Besides the autobiographical theories concerning the *Sonnets* many others, allegorical, mystical, and fantastical, have been proposed, which it would take too much space even to enumerate here; neither is it possible to make more than a passing reference to the notions that "Mr. W. H." was William Hart, the poet's nephew (who was not born until a year

after *The Passionate Pilgrim* was printed, and was only nine years old in 1609), William Hughes (on the strength of the capitalized and italicized *Hues* in the 20th Sonnet), "William Himself" (a German notion, revived by Mr. Parke Godwin, in 1901), or Queen Elizabeth; or that the poems are addressed to Ideal Manhood, or the Spirit of Beauty, or the Reason, or the Divine Logos; or that the "dark lady" is Dramatic Art, or the Catholic Church, or the Bride of the Canticles, "black but comely."

To most of the Baconian heretics the *Sonnets* have been a stumbling-block. Mr. W. D. O'Connor, in his *Hamlet's Note-Book*, says that they cannot be Bacon's; "their autobiographic revelations are incompatible with the history of Bacon's life." We are then told that Walter Raleigh wrote the *Sonnets*; as one G. S. Caldwell had maintained nearly ten years earlier (1877) in Australia. Raleigh was lame, after being wounded in 1596, as the author of Sonnets 38 and 89 represents himself, etc. On the other hand, Judge Holmes has no doubt that the *Sonnets*, like the plays, were written by Bacon. "The similitudes of thought, style, and diction," he says, "are such as to put at rest all question on that head." In 1887, another learned judge, in California, Hosmer by name, published a book on the *Sonnets*, the theory of which is that the poems were addressed by Bacon to Shakespeare; and that the former, making over the plays to the latter, gives his directions concerning the concealment of

their true authorship. The *Sonnets* contain impersonations of Truth, Beauty, Thought, the Drama, etc. These may serve as specimens of the manner in which the Baconians deal with the poems.

It would be interesting, if space permitted, to consider the *Sonnets* as *poems* — to note the “linked sweetness long drawn out” of their verse, not unmixed with most sonorous music, and what Coleridge has aptly called their “boundless fertility and laboured condensation of thought;” or to view them, in the words of Furnivall, “as a piece of music, or as Shakespeare’s pathetic sonata, each melody introduced, dropped again, brought in again with variations, but one full strain of undying love and friendship running through the whole;” but I can only close with a summing up of what I have attempted to prove: —

I. That the *Sonnets* were not edited by Shakespeare, but by some anonymous collector, who did not, and obviously could not, ask the poet or the persons to whom they were addressed for aid in settling a textual question.

II. That the arrangement of the *Sonnets* in the edition of 1609 was therefore not authoritative, but simply the best conjectural one that the collector could make, from a study of the poems and what he knew of their history; and there is, moreover, internal evidence that the order is not strictly chronological.

III. That the great majority of the *Sonnets* are

probably personal, or autobiographical, and were not intended for publication; but it is not probable that the first 126 (or such of these as are personal) are all addressed to one man, and the rest to one woman, with whom Shakespeare and that man were entangled.

IV. That "Mr. W. H." was probably the person to whom the *Sonnets* are addressed, rather than the one who collected and edited them; and that, if so, he was probably William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke; but the "dark lady," to whom most of the second series (127-152) were addressed, cannot be positively identified.

V. That while the majority of the *Sonnets* were probably written between 1598 and 1601, some of them, particularly those which are not connected with the main story, may be of later date.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE TRANSITION FROM COMEDY TO TRAGEDY

AFTER the plays that have been already considered, we come to a group of comedies, so called, which are in marked contrast to those of the preceding period. They are comedies only in name, or because they do not have a tragical ending. They are *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Troilus and Cressida* — “one earnest, another dark and severe, the last bitter and ironical” (Dowden).

*All's Well That Ends Well* was first printed in the folio of 1623, in the division of *Comedies*. There can be little doubt that the play is a revision of the “Love Labours Wonne,” included in Meres’s often-quoted list of 1598. This was first suggested by Farmer in his *Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare* (1766), and his opinion has been endorsed by the great majority of more recent editors and critics. Hunter believed that *Love’s Labour’s Won* was *The Tempest*; Mr. A. E. Brae argues for *Much Ado*; and Craik and Hertzberg for *The Taming of the Shrew*. Fleay objects to regarding *All’s Well*

as the play, on the ground that "the present title is alluded to in several places in the play itself which are clearly part of the early work;" but this, if true, does not settle the question. The play may have had a double title originally — *Love's Labour's Won, or All's Well*, etc., — like *Twelfth Night*, and probably *Henry VIII.*; or the present title may be a later one, suggested by the occurrence of the proverb in the play.

If Farmer and the rest are right, *All's Well* was originally a companion play to *Love's Labour's Lost*, and written about the same time, or not far from 1592. Knight, Ulrici, and some other critics put the date earlier than 1590. The marks of early work are seen in the frequent rhymed passages (some of them in alternate rhymes), the sonnet letter in iii. 4. 4 17, the lyrical, non-dramatic form of certain portions, and some peculiar grammatical constructions. Most of these earlier passages — "boulders from the old strata imbedded in the later deposits," as Fleay calls them — will be easily recognized by the reader. There are critics, however, who doubt whether any portion of the play is of early origin.

The date of the revision of the play was probably not earlier than 1601, and may have been a year or two later, some critics making it 1604, 1605, or 1606.

The text presents many difficulties, on account of the peculiarities of the style and the corruptions

of the folio. Verplanck remarks: "The language approaches in many places to the style of *Measure for Measure*, as if much of it had been written in that season of gloom which imparted to the poet's style something of the darkness that hung over his soul. In addition to these inherent difficulties, there are several indications of an imperfect revision, as if words and lines intended to be rejected had been left in the manuscript, together with those written on the margin or interlined, for the purpose of being substituted for them. We have not the means afforded in several other plays where similar misprints have been found of correcting them by the collation of the old editions, as there is no other than that in the folio, which is less carefully printed than usual, not being even divided into scenes. From all these concurring causes there are many passages of obscure or doubtful meaning, some of which would perhaps remain so, even if we had them as the author left them; while others are probably darkened by typographical errors. Some of these difficulties have been perfectly cleared up, by the ingenuity or antiquarian industry of the later commentators; as to others, we must be content with explanations and conjectural corrections, which are only probable until something more satisfactory can be presented."

The story of Heleua and Bertram was taken by Shakespeare from Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*, 1566, Paynter having translated it from Boccaccio's



*Decameron*, which was "the great storehouse of romantic and humorous narrative for the poets and dramatists of that and the succeeding age." The characters of the Countess, Lafeu, Parolles, and the Clown are the poet's own.

"In *All's Well That Ends Well* a subject of extreme difficulty, when regarded on the ethical side, was treated by Shakespeare with a full consciousness of its difficulty. A woman who seeks her husband, and gains him against his will; who afterwards by a fraud — a fraud however pious — defeats his intention of estranging her, and becomes the mother of his child; such a personage it would seem a sufficiently difficult task to render attractive or admirable. Yet Helena has been named by Coleridge 'the loveliest of Shakspeare's characters.' Possibly Coleridge recognized in Helena the single quality which, if brought to bear upon himself by one to whom he yielded love and worship, would have given definiteness and energy to his somewhat vague and incoherent life. For sake of this one thing Shakspeare was interested in the story, and so admirable did it seem to him that he could not choose but endeavour to make beautiful and noble the entire character and action of Helena. This one thing is the energy, the leap-up, the direct advance of the *will* of Helena, her prompt, unerroneous tendency towards the right and efficient *deed*. . . . A motto for the play may be found in the words uttered with pious astonishment by the

clown, when his mistress bids him to begone, 'That man should be at woman's command, and yet no hurt done.' Helena is the providence of the play; and there is 'no hurt done,' but rather healing — healing of the body of the French king, healing of the spirit of the man she loves" (Dowden).

*Measure for Measure* was first printed in the folio of 1623. No direct allusion to it in Shakespeare's time has been found, and we have nothing to fix the date of its composition but the style and versification, with some minor points of internal evidence. The critics, however, have generally agreed that the play was written in 1603 or early in 1604.

The story, like that of *Othello*, was originally from the *Hecatommithi* of Giraldi Cinthio, published in Venice in 1566. Whetstone's tragedy of *Promos and Cassandra* (1578) was founded on Cinthio's novel, and was probably known to Shakespeare, though he owed little to either the English play or the Italian tale. Whetstone "followed Cinthio very closely, in making the sister (the 'woful Cassandra' of his play, the Epitia of Cinthio, and the Isabella of Shakespeare) yield to the governor's desires and her brother's pusillanimous sophistry — a degradation which Shakespeare has avoided by the introduction of Mariana, and the very venial artifice of Isabella, which Coleridge censures, but which is certainly, if a blemish at all, a very light one compared with the

intrinsic repulsiveness of making the heroine the wife of the guilty governor, and the supplicant for his life. The inferior characters of Whetstone are the same only in their habits and occupations — the painting of their character is Shakespeare's own as much as that of the nobler personages, and the high moral wisdom which overflows in their dialogue. Isabella, as a character, is entirely his own creation."

Whetstone, some years after writing his play, translated the original story in his *Heptameron of Civil Discourses* (1582). He also prefixed the substance of it to his play as an "argument."

Critics have objected to Shakespeare's plot as an improbable fiction, but it strangely happens that something much like it has occurred several times in different ages and countries. One of these is the story of Colonel Kirke, in the reign of James II., related by Pepys and Macaulay. Another occurred in Holland, in the time of Charles the Bold, a century before Shakespeare's birth. Another, which may have been the foundation of Cinthio's novel, is said to have taken place under one of the old Dukes of Ferrara.

The Angelo of the Netherlands, whose history is recorded by several of the old Dutch and Flemish chroniclers, was a brave and renowned knight, who was governor of Flushing; and it was the wife of a state criminal, confined on a charge of sedition, who is tempted to yield up her honour on condition

of receiving from the governor an order to the gaoler to deliver her husband up to her. In the meanwhile, a prior order had been sent; the husband was secretly beheaded; and the wife received, on presenting her order, a chest containing the bloody corpse. Upon the duke's visiting his principality of Zealand, she appealed to him for justice. The governor confessed his guilt, and threw himself with confidence upon the duke's mercy, relying on his former services and favour. The duke commanded him to marry the widow, and endow her formally with all his wealth. She at first shrunk with horror from the alliance, but at last consented to the ceremony, on the prayers of her family, who thought their honour involved in it. When this was done, the governor returned to the duke, and informed him that the injured person was now satisfied. "So am not I," replied the duke. He sent the guilty man to the same prison where his victim had died. A confessor was sent with him; and after the last rites of religion, without further delay, the governor was beheaded. His new wife and her friends had hurried to the prison, and arrived there only to receive the bloody trunk in the same manner that she had received the remains of her first husband. Overcome with horror, she fainted, and never recovered.

*Measure for Measure*, as Verplanck remarks, "bears the stamp of that period of the author's life, first noted by Hallam, when some sad influence

weighed upon the poet's spirit, and prompted him constantly to appear as 'the stern censor of man.' I see no reason to doubt that this did not arise merely from a change of taste, or an experiment in dramatic art, but was, in some manner, connected with events or circumstances personal to the author, and affecting his temper, disposition, and moral associations of thought. . . . Although we often find in his later works a calm and serene spirit of enjoyment, as in the pastoral beauties of Perdita's conversation, and the mountain scenes of *Cymbeline* — though his comic sketches in his later dramas prove that his perception of whimsical or absurd character was as acute and active as ever, and his power of graphic delineation as vivid — yet even then there seems to be an absence of that personal abandonment of the author's own spirit to the beauty or the humour of the scene to which he had before accustomed us. He appears more as the great philosophical artist, depicting the very truth and nature of his scenes, and not, as was his former wont, as himself one of his own joyous throng, mixing in the plot against the bachelor liberty of Benedick — enjoying the frolics in Eastcheap as much as Falstaff or the Prince — or joining his own voice in the boisterous glee of Sir Toby and Sir Andrew. . . . But *Measure for Measure* breathes a sterner spirit than belongs to the productions of either the earlier or the later periods. Dr. Johnson has said that its 'comic scenes are

natural and pleasing.' Their fidelity to nature cannot, indeed, be denied. But if they please, they do so from their faithfulness of portraiture; not, like the scenes of Bottom or Falstaff, and their companions, from their exuberance of mirthful sport, or their rich originality of invention and wit. They, as well as the loftier scenes of the piece, are but too faithful pictures of the degrading and hardening influence of licentious passion, from the lighter profligacy of Lucio, the dissipated gentleman, to the grosser and contented degradation of the Clown; and if these are all painted with the truth of Hogarth or Crabbe, they are depicted with no air of sport or mirth, but rather with that of bitter scorn. The author seems to smile like his own Cassius, 'as if he mocked himself.'"

Furnivall concisely and aptly describes Isabella as "a thing enskied and sainted, an immortal spirit,' Shakspeare's first wholly Christian woman, steadfast and true as Portia, Brutus's wife, pure as Lucrece's soul, merciful above Portia, Bassanio's bride, in that she prays for forgiveness for her foe, not her friend; with an unyielding will, a martyr's spirit above Helena's of *All's Well*, the highest type of woman that Shakspeare has yet drawn."

*Troilus and Cressida* was first published, so far as we know, in 1609, when two quarto editions were printed from the same type, but with somewhat different title-pages. Both state that the play is "by William Shakespeare," and one refers to its

having been "acted by the Kings Maiesties ser-  
vants at the Globe."

One of these editions differs from the other in  
having the following preface:—

"A neuer writer to an euer reader.

"Newes.

"Eternall reader, you haue heere a new play, neuer  
stal'd with the Stage, neuer clapper-clawd with the  
palmes of the vulger, and yet passing full of the palme  
comicall; for it is a birth of your braine, that neuer  
under-tooke any thing commicall vainely: and were but  
the vaine names of commedies changde for the titles of  
commodities, or of playes for pleas, you should see all  
those grand censors, that now stile them such vanities,  
flock to them for the maine grace of their grauties; espe-  
cially this authors commedies, that are so fram'd to the  
life, that they serue for the most common commentaries  
of all the actions of our liues, showing such a dexteritie,  
and power of witte, that the most displeas'd with playes  
are pleas'd with his commedies. And all such dull and  
heauy-witted worldlings, as were neuer capable of the  
witte of a commedie, comming by report of them to his  
representations, haue found that witte there that they  
neuer found in themselues, and haue parted better-  
wittied then they came; feeling an edge of witte set  
vpon them, more than euer they dreamd they had braine  
to grinde it on. So much and such sauord salt of witte  
is in his commedies, that they seeme (for their height of  
pleasure) to be borne in that sea that brought forth  
*Venus*. Amongst all there is none more witty then this;  
and had I time I would comment vpon it, though I know

it needs not (for so much as will make you thinke your testern well bestowd), but for so much worth, as euen poore I know to be stuff in it. It deserues such a labour, as well as the best commedy in *Terence* or *Plautus*: and beleue this, that when hee is gone, and his commedies out of sale, you will scramble for them, and set vp a new *English* inquisition. Take this for a warning, and at the perill of your pleasures, losse, and iudgments, refuse not, nor like this the lesse for not being sullied, with the smoaky breath of the multitude; but thanke fortune for the scape it hath made amongst you. Since by the grand possessors wills, I belieue, you should haue prayd for them, rather than beene prayd. And so I leaue all such to bee prayd for (for the states of their wits healths) that will not praise it. — *Vale.*”

The play was not reprinted until it appeared in the folio of 1623, where it stands between the “Histories” and “Tragedies;” and it is not mentioned at all in the “Catalogue,” or table of contents, at the beginning of the volume. The editors seem to have been puzzled to classify it. The “Tragedies” at first began with *Coriolanus*, followed by *Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet*. *Troilus and Cressida* was evidently intended to come next, and was put in type and paged for that place; but it was afterwards transferred to its present position, and *Timon of Athens* used instead. The numbers of the pages were cancelled, with the exception of the second and third, which were accidentally left with the 79 and 80 of the original



pagination. The only reason that can be imagined for this change is that the editors were in doubt whether the play was a "tragedy" or a "history," and therefore decided to put it between the two, and to evade the responsibility of cataloguing it in the table of contents. The writer of the prologue, whoever he may have been, treats it as a comedy.

The date of the play cannot be determined with any certainty. In 1599 Dekker and Chettle were preparing a play on the same subject, and an entry in the Stationers' Registers, dated February 7, 1602-3, proves that a *Troilus and Cressida* had been acted by Shakespeare's company, the Lord Chamberlain's Servants. This may possibly have been an early draught of Shakespeare's play. Internal evidence is partly in favour of a date as early as this, and partly of one some five or six years later. Some critics have therefore decided that the play was written as early as 1602 or 1603, while others put it as late as 1608 or 1609. More likely, as Verplanck, White, and others believe, it was first written as early as 1602, and revised and enlarged somewhere between 1606 and 1609.

If Shakespeare did not draw his materials from some earlier play, he probably took "the love-story" from Chaucer's *Troilus and Cresseide*, and "the camp story" from the *Recuyell of the historyes of Troye, translated and drawen out of frenshe into englishe by W. Caxton, 1471* (from Raoul le Fevre's *Recueil des Histoires de Troyes*), or Lydgate's

*Hystorye, Sege and dystruccyon of Troye*, 1513, 1555 (from Guido di Colonna), or both. Thersites, or at least a hint of the character, seems to be taken from Chapman's *Iliad*, the first seven books of which appeared in 1597.

*Troilus and Cressida* has been a perplexing subject for many of the ablest critics. Coleridge remarks: "There is no one of Shakspeare's plays harder to characterize. The name, and the remembrances connected with it, prepare us for the representation of attachment no less faithful than fervent on the side of the youth, and of sudden and shameless inconstancy on the part of the lady. And this is, indeed, as the gold thread on which the scenes are strung, though often kept out of sight, and out of mind by gems of greater value than itself. But as Shakspeare calls for nothing from the mausoleum of history, or the catacombs of tradition, without giving, or eliciting, some permanent and general interest, and brings forward no subject which he does not moralize or intellectualize, — so here he has drawn in Cressida the portrait of a vehement passion, that, having its true origin and proper cause in warmth of temperament, fastens on, rather than fixes to, some one object by liking and temporary preference. This Shakspeare has contrasted with the profound affection represented in *Troilus*, and alone worthy the name of love — affection, passionate indeed, swollen with the confluence of youthful instincts and youthful fauzy, and

growing in the radiance of hope newly risen, in short enlarged by the collective sympathies of nature; but still having a depth of calmer element in a will stronger than desire, more entire than choice, and which gives permanence to its own act by converting it into faith and duty. Hence with excellent judgment, and with an excellence higher than mere judgment can give, at the close of the play, when Cressida has sunk into infamy below retrieval and beneath hope, the same will which had been the substance and the basis of his love, while the restless pleasures and passionate longings, like sea-waves, had tossed but on its surface — this same moral energy is represented as snatching him aloof from all neighbourhood with her dishonour, from all lingering fondness and languishing regrets, whilst it rushes with him into other and nobler duties, and deepens the channel which his heroic brother's death had left empty for its collected flood. . . .

“To all this, however, so little comparative projection is given — nay, the masterly group of Agamemnon, Nestor, and Ulysses, and, still more in advance, that of Achilles, Ajax, and Thersites, so manifestly occupy the foreground — that the subservience and vassalage of strength and animal courage to intellect and policy seems to be the lesson most often in our poet's view, and which he has taken little pains to connect with the former more interesting moral impersonated in the titular

hero and heroine of the drama. But I am half inclined to believe that Shakspeare's main object, or, shall I rather say, his ruling impulse, was to translate the poetic heroes of paganism into the not less rude, but more intellectually vigorous, and more *featurely*, warriors of Christian chivalry, and to substantiate the distinct and graceful profiles or outlines of the Homeric epic into the flesh and blood of the romantic drama—in short, to give a grand history-piece in the robust style of Albert Durer."

In an article "On Reading Shakespeare" (in *The Galaxy*, for February, 1877), Grant White has some admirable comments on this play, some passages from which may well supplement those from Coleridge:—

"*Troilus and Cressida* is Shakespeare's wisest play in the way of worldly wisdom. It is filled choke-full of sententious, and in most cases slightly satirical revelations of human nature, uttered with a felicity of phrase and an impressiveness of metaphor that make each one seem like a beam of light shot into the recesses of man's heart.

"The undramatic character of *Troilus and Cressida* appears in its structure, its personages, and its purpose. . . . There is also a singular lack of that peculiar characteristic of Shakespeare's dramatic style, the marked distinction and nice discrimination of the individual traits, mental and moral, of the various personages. Ulysses is the real

hero of the play; the chief, or, at least, the great purpose of which is the utterance of the Ulyssean view of life; and in this play Shakespeare is Ulysses, or Ulysses Shakespeare. In all his other plays Shakespeare so lost his personal consciousness in the individuality of his own creations that they think and feel, as well as act, like real men and women other than their creator, so that we cannot truly say of the thoughts and feelings which they express, that Shakespeare says thus or so; for it is not Shakespeare who speaks, but they with his lips. But in Ulysses, Shakespeare, acting upon a mere hint, filling up a mere traditional outline, drew a man of mature years, of wide observation, of profoundest cogitative power, one who knew all the weakness and all the wiles of human nature, and who yet remained with blood unbittered and soul unsoured — a man who saw through all shams, and fathomed all motives, and who yet was not scornful of his kind, not misanthropic, hardly cynical except in passing moods; and what other man was this than Shakespeare himself? What had he to do when he had passed forty years, but to utter his own thoughts when he would find words for the lips of Ulysses? And thus it is that *Troilus and Cressida* is Shakespeare's wisest play. If we would know what Shakespeare thought of men and their motives after he reached maturity, we have but to read this drama — drama it is, but with what other character, who shall say? For,

like the world's pageant, it is neither tragedy nor comedy, but a tragi-comic history, in which the intrigues of amorous men and light-o'-loves and the brokerage of panders are mingled with the deliberations of sages and the strife and the death of heroes. . . . And why, indeed, should Ulysses not speak for Shakespeare, or how could it be other than that he should? The man who had written *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, and *Macbeth*, if he wished to find Ulysses, had only to turn his mind's eye inward; and thus we have in this drama Shakespeare's only piece of introspective work."

Although these three "comedies" that are not comedies appear to form a natural group, and indicate that Shakespeare's interest was changing from comedy to tragedy, it is not necessary to suppose that they were written or revised in immediate succession and apart from other work. Two of them — *All's Well* and *Troilus and Cressida* — we have seen to be early plays which were taken up at this time for revision or reconstruction; and some critics (see page 321 above) believe that *Troilus and Cressida* was connected with the "War of the Theatres," though this is highly improbable. That the prevailing tone of these plays, as Hallam, Verplanck, Dowden, and others assume, was not due merely to a change in taste or an inclination to try a new experiment in dramatic composition, but was connected in some way with Shakespeare's personal experiences, can hardly be doubted; though this

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view is vehemently opposed by some excellent critics, who insist that he simply wrote what theatrical managers wanted, whether comedy or tragedy. "If a comedy was called for," they ask, "would he have declined to furnish it on the ground that he was in his tragic period?" Probably not; but it would have proved to be a comedy like *All's Well* or *Measure for Measure* rather than *As You Like It* or *Twelfth Night*.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE GREAT TRAGEDIES

THE earliest edition of *Hamlet*, so far as we know, appeared in quarto form in 1603; and the title-page informs us that it had "beene diverse times acted by his Highnesse servants in the Cittie of London, as also in the two Vniversities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elsewhere."

In 1604, a second quarto was published, claiming to be "newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie."

A third quarto, reprinted from the second, appeared in 1605; a fourth in 1611; and later a fifth, which is undated. No other has been discovered that was issued during the life of Shakespeare or previous to the publication of the folio of 1623.

The text of the folio varies considerably from that of the quartos, and it has been thought that it might be derived from "some hitherto unknown quarto." It is not impossible that there may have been such a quarto. No copy of the quarto of 1603 was known until 1823, when one was found by Sir Henry Bunbury. A second was picked up in 1856



by a Dublin bookseller, who paid a shilling for it. The former, which lacks the last page, was afterwards sold to the Duke of Devonshire for £230; the latter, which wants the title-page, was bought by Halliwell-Phillipps for £120, and is now in the British Museum. If the folio text was not from a lost quarto, it was probably from a manuscript obtained by the editors from the theatre. The standard text of the play is chiefly made up by a collation of the second quarto and the folio.

The relation of the first quarto to the second has been much disputed. Collier, White, and some other critics believe that the former is merely an imperfect report of the play as published in the latter; that it was printed, either from short-hand notes taken at the theatre, or from a stage-copy cut down for representation and perhaps corrupted by the insertion of stuff from an earlier play on the same subject. The second quarto, on the other hand, was an authorized edition of the play from "the true and perfect copy."

Other critics — among whom are Caldecott, Knight, Staunton, and Dyce — believe that the first quarto represents, though in a corrupt form, the first draught of the play, while the second gives it as remodelled and enlarged by the author. It is not necessary to suppose that the former was written near the time when it was published; it was more likely an early production of the poet. After the revision the original copy could be more

easily obtained for surreptitious publication, and it may have been printed in haste to "head off" an authorized edition of the remodelled play.

Another theory, and a very plausible one, is that of Messrs. Clark and Wright, brought out in the "Clarendon Press" edition of the play; namely, "that there was an old play on the story of *Hamlet*, some portions of which are still preserved in the quarto of 1603; that about the year 1602 Shakespeare took this and began to remodel it, as he had done with other plays; that the quarto of 1603 represents the play after it had been retouched by him to a certain extent, but before his alterations were complete; and that in the quarto of 1604 we have for the first time the *Hamlet* of Shakespeare."

There was certainly an old play on the subject of Hamlet, and some critics believe that it was an early work of Shakespeare's. The first allusion to it that has been discovered is in an *Epistle* "To the Gentleman Students of both Universities," by Thomas Nash, prefixed to Greene's *Menaphon*, printed in 1589. Referring to the playwrights of that day, Nash says: "It is a common practice now a daies amongst a sort of shifting companions, that runne through every arte and thrive by none to leave the trade of *Noverint* whereto they were borne, and busie themselves with the indevours of art, that could scarcely latinize their necke-verse if they should have neede; yet English Seneca read by candle-light yeeldes manie good sentences, as

*Bloud is a begger, and so foorth: and if you intreate him faire in a frostie morning, he will affoord you whole Hamlets, I should say Handfulls of tragical speaches."*

In Henslowe's *Diary* the following entry occurs: "9 of June, 1594, Rd at hamlet . . . viiiij<sup>s</sup>" Five lines above the entry is this memorandum: "In the name of God Amen, beginninge at Newington, my Lord Admeralle and my Lorde chamberlen men, as foloweth, 1594." At this date, Shakespeare was one of the company of actors known as "the Lord Chamberlain's men."

Again, in Lodge's *Wits miserie and the Worlds madnesse*, published in 1596, we have an allusion to "y<sup>e</sup> ghost which cried so miserally [*sic*] at y<sup>e</sup> theator, like an oisterwife, *Hamlet reuenge*."

It is impossible to say what use Shakespeare made of this old English play (it cannot be a youthful production of his own), as it seems to be hopelessly lost. Of another source from which he probably derived his material we have better knowledge: namely, *The Hystorie of Hamlet*, translated from the *Histoires Tragiques* of Francis de Belleforest. The story of Hamlet is found in the fifth volume, which was printed at Paris in 1570. The English version was probably made soon after, though the only edition now extant is that of 1608.

The poet has followed the *Hystorie* in some of its main incidents — the murder of Hamlet's father by

his uncle, the marriage of his mother with the murderer, his feigned madness, his killing of Polonius, his interview with his mother, his voyage to England, his return, and his revenge — but not in the *dénouement*. In the *Hystorie* Hamlet, after his uncle's death, becomes King of Denmark, visits England again, marries two wives, by one of whom he is betrayed into the power of his maternal uncle, Wiglerus, and is finally slain in battle.

It may be added that Belleforest got the story from the *Historia Danica* of Saxo Grammaticus, written about the close of the 12th century, though the earliest existing edition of it is that of Paris, 1514.

The mere bibliography of the literature of *Hamlet* would fill a volume. The amount that has been written about the play far exceeds that on any other of Shakespeare's works. Furness does not exaggerate when he says in the preface to his monumental edition: "No one of mortal mould (save Him 'whose blessed feet were nailed for our advantage to the bitter cross') ever trod this earth, commanding such absorbing interest as this Hamlet, this mere creation of a poet's brain. No syllable that he whispers, no word let fall by any one near him, but is caught and pondered as no words ever have been, except of Holy Writ. Upon no throne built by mortal hands has ever 'beat so fierce a light' as upon that airy fabric reared at Elsinore."

Of the countless attempts to pluck out the heart

of Hamlet's mystery, that of Goethe (in *Wilhelm Meister*) is one of the most famous, and has met with considerable favour among more recent critics. The gist of it may be stated very briefly. After quoting the ejaculation of the Prince at the close of his interview with the Ghost (i. 5. 189, 190),—

“The time is out of joint; O cursed spite,  
That ever I was born to set it right!”—

Goethe continues thus: “In these words, I imagine, is the key to Hamlet's whole procedure, and to me it is clear that Shakespeare sought to depict a great deed laid upon a soul unequal to the performance of it. In this view I find the piece composed throughout. Here is an oak-tree planted in a costly vase, which should have received into its bosom only lovely flowers; the roots spread out, the vase is shivered to pieces.

“A beautiful, pure, and most moral nature, without the strength of nerve which makes the hero, sinks beneath a burden which it can neither bear nor throw off; every duty is holy to him,—this too hard. The impossible is required of him,—not the impossible in itself, but the impossible to him. How he winds, turns, agonizes, advances, and recoils, ever reminded, ever reminding himself, and at last almost loses his purpose from his thoughts, without ever again recovering his peace of mind.”

A more common view is that Hamlet's will is paralyzed by excess of intellect. This theory origi-

nated with Coleridge, who says: "We see a great, an almost enormous intellectual activity, and a proportionate aversion to real action consequent upon it, with all its symptoms and accompanying qualities. Hamlet is brave and careless of death; but he vacillates from sensibility, and procrastinates from thought, and loses the power of action in the energy of resolve."

A far more satisfactory theory has been advanced more recently in Germany, to which Furness refers in the preface to his edition as follows:—

"The last theory of Hamlet's character which has arrested special attention in Germany by the bold and animated way in which it has been set forth by its chiefest expounder, Werder, was first proposed in strong terms by Klein. It sweeps aside every vestige of Goethe's explanation, with all theories akin to it. It affirms Hamlet to be a man of action, never at a loss, never wavering, taking in at once the position of affairs, adjusting himself thereto with admirable sagacity, and instantly acting with consummate tact as occasions require."

As Furness adds, "A theory so directly opposed to all accepted ideas of Hamlet claims a full exposition;" and he therefore gives more than sixteen pages of fine print to a translation of passages from Werder's *Vorlesungen über Shakespeare's Hamlet* (Berlin, 1875). It is to be regretted that the entire work is not accessible in English.

This theory is fully accepted by Furness himself,

as by not a few of the recent editors and critics. Hudson, who in the first edition of *Shakespeare's Life, Art, and Characters* (1872) had taken the ground that insanity was the real explanation of the character—that, “in plain terms, Hamlet is mad; . . . a derangement partial and occasional, paroxysms of wildness and fury alternating with intervals of serenity and composure”—adopts the Klein-Werder theory in the revised edition of his book, published in 1882. After referring to the various changes his views of Hamlet had undergone in the course of thirty-eight years, he states that he became acquainted with Werder's discussion of the subject through Furness's edition of the play. He adds: “This essay seemed to me then, and seems to me still, altogether the justest and most adequate analytic interpretation of the character that criticism has yet produced. I read the matter again and again, with intense avidity, and almost unalloyed satisfaction; feeling that there, for the first time, the real scope of the theme had been rightly seized and its contents properly discoursed.”

Sidney Lee, the latest of Shakespeare's biographers, adheres to Coleridge's theory, regarding *Hamlet* as “mainly a psychological effort, a study of the reflective temperament in excess.” The hero, he adds, is “a high-born youth of chivalric instincts and finely developed intellect, who, when stirred to avenge a desperate private wrong, is foiled by introspective workings of the brain that paralyze the will.”

*Othello* was just published in quarto form in 1622, with the following preface:—

“The Stationer to the Reader.

“To set forth a booke without an Epistle, were like to the old English prouerbe, *A blew coat without a badge*, & the Author being dead, I thought good to take that piece of worke upon mee: To commend it, I will not, for that which is good, I hope euery man will commend, without intreaty: and I am the bolder, because the Authors name is sufficient to vent his worke. Thus leauing euery one to the liberty of iudgement: I haue ventered to print this Play, and leane it to the generall censure.

“Yours,

“Thomas VValkley.”

The next year it appeared in the first folio, where the text varies materially from that of the quarto, and was evidently printed from a different manuscript of the play.

*Othello* was formerly reckoned one of the latest of the plays, being dated by the editors and critics at various points between 1611 and 1614; but, according to the Accounts of the Masters of the Revels (published in 1842) “The Moor of Venis” was performed “in the Bankettinge house att Whitehall” on “Hallomas Day being the first of Novembar,” 1604. This and other similar entries were afterwards (1868) proved to be forgeries; but they have since been shown to be based on facts. Inter-



nal evidence also, it is now generally agreed, proves that the play was written in or near 1604. Stokes (*Chronological Order of Shakespeare's Plays*, 1878) shows that it was written before 1606 by the fact that in the quarto of 1622 (i. 1. 4) we find the oath "Sblood" (God's blood), while this is omitted in the folio. This indicates that the quarto was printed from a copy made before the act of Parliament issued in 1606 against the abuse of the name of God in plays, etc. So "Zounds" and "by the mass" (in ii. 3) are found in the quarto but not in the folio.

It must, however, be borne in mind that at the date assumed for the production of *Othello* Shakespeare was in the full maturity of his powers. He had already written *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth* and *Lear* were soon to follow. It seems fitting that these "four great tragedies" should be associated in their time of composition as in the pre-eminent rank they hold among the poet's works. There is no other such group in the literature of any country or any age.

As to the position which *Othello* is to hold among the four, the best critics do not agree; but there have not been wanting those who assigned it the foremost place. Macaulay expresses the opinion that it "is perhaps the greatest work in the world." Wordsworth says: "The tragedy of *Othello*, Plato's records of the last scenes in the career of Socrates, and Izaak Walton's *Life of George Herbert* are

the most pathetic of human compositions;” and again, in one of his sonnets, referring to books, he says: —

“There find I personal themes, a plenteous store,  
Matter wherein right voluble I am,  
To which I listen with a ready ear;  
Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear, —  
The gentle lady married to the Moor,  
And heavenly Una with her milk-white lamb.’

The earliest known reference to the play is found in the MS. diary of Hans Jacob Wurmsser von Vendenhagen, who accompanied Louis Frederick, Duke of Wurtemberg-Mumpelgard, in a diplomatic mission to England in 1610 on behalf of the Protestant German princes. In this little volume, preserved in the British Museum, we read under date of April 10, 1610: “S. E. alla au Globe, lieu ordinaire ou l’on joue les commedies; y fut representé l’histoire du More de Venise.” There can be little doubt that this refers to Shakespeare’s play.

The story of the play appears to have been taken from the *Hecatommithi* of Giraldi Cinthio (see page 370 above), published in 1565. The tale is short, not longer than a single act of *Othello*, and the following is an outline of it: —

There lived at Venice a valiant Moor, held in great esteem for his military talent and services. Desdemona, a lady of marvellous beauty, attracted not by female fancy (*appetito donnesco*), but by his

high virtues, became enamoured of the Moor, who returned her love, and, in spite of the opposition of her relations, married her. They lived in great happiness in Venice until the Moor (he has no other name in the story) was chosen to the military command of Cyprus, whither his wife insisted on accompanying him. He took with him a favourite ensign, a man of great personal beauty, but of the most depraved heart — a boaster and a coward. His wife is the friend of Desdemona. The ensign falls passionately in love with Desdemona, who, wrapped up in love of her husband, pays no regard to him. His love then turns to bitter hate, and he resolves to charge her with infidelity, and to fix the Moor's suspicions upon a favourite captain of his. Soon after, that officer strikes and wounds a soldier on guard, for which the Moor cashier's him. Desdemona endeavours to obtain his pardon; and this gives the ensign an opportunity of insinuating accusations against her, and rousing the Moor's jealousy. These suspicions he confirms by stealing from her a favourite wrought handkerchief, and leaving it on the captain's bed. Then the Moor and his ensign plot together to kill Desdemona and her supposed lover. The latter is waylaid and wounded in the dark by the ensign. Desdemona is beaten to death by him also "with a stocking filled with sand;" and then the Moor and he attempt to conceal their murder by pulling down the ceiling, and giving out that she was killed by the fall of a

beam. The Moor becomes almost frantic with his loss — turns upon the ensign, whom he degrades and drives from him. The ensign revenges himself by disclosing the murder to the captain, upon whose accusation to the senate the Moor is arrested, tried, tortured, and then banished, and afterwards killed by Desdemona's relatives.

Shakespeare owes to the tale only the general outline of his plot, and the suggestion of the character of Desdemona, which, however, he has elevated as well as expanded. He is also indebted to Cinthio for the artful insinuations by which Iago first rouses the Moor's suspicions. But all else is essentially the poet's own. Cinthio's savage Moor and cunning ensign have scarcely any thing in common with the heroic, the gentle, the terrible Othello, or with Iago's proud, contemptuous intellect, bitter wit, cool malignity, and "learned spirit." Cassio and Emilia owe to Shakespeare all their individuality: Roderigo, Brabantio, and the rest, are entirely his creation.

Coleridge was the first to point out — what some of the earlier, and indeed, some of the later critics needed to be reminded of — that the passion of Othello is not altogether jealousy, but rather a "solemn agony" that the woman who had been to him the ideal of purity should prove to be a wanton. Jealousy, in the strict sense, has its origin in the man's own suspicious nature, and is generally groundless or based upon "trifles light

as air" that are misconceived and magnified by foul surmise. It is nourished, as Massinger says,

"with imagined food,  
Holding no real ground on which to raise  
A building of suspicion she was ever  
Or can be false ;"

or, as Hunter says, in commenting upon Iago's description of it as

"the green-eyed monster which doth mock  
The meat it feeds on"

(not "make" it, as some alter the reading, though that is also true enough): "Jealousy mocks the person who surrenders his mind to her influence, deluding him perpetually with some new show of suspicion, sporting with his agonized feelings, just as the feline tribe sport with the prey which they have got into their power." Ford, in the *Merry Wives*, and Leontes, in *The Winter's Tale*, are jealous; the one with only comical, the other with almost tragical results, but both without the shadow of reason for their suspicions. But Othello, as he himself says, is "not easily jealous;" and when Iago tells him he is — which he would not have done if he had not known it was a lie — Othello, with honest indignation, replies: —

"Why, why is this?  
Think'st thou I'd make a life of jealousy,  
To follow still the changes of the moon

With fresh suspicions? No; to be once in doubt  
 Is once to be resolved: exchange me for a goat,  
 When I shall turn the business of my soul  
 To such exsufflicate and blown surmises,  
 Matching thy inference. 'T is not to make me jealous  
 To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,  
 Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances well;  
 Where virtue is, these are more virtuous:  
 Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw  
 The smallest fear or doubt of her revolt,  
 For she had eyes and chose me. No, Iago!  
 I'll see before I doubt, when I doubt *prove*;  
 And on the *proof* there is no more but this,—  
 Away at once with love or jealousy!"

And it is not until Iago does make him "see" what seems to be "proof," and adds his own lying testimony concerning Cassio's talk in his sleep and other falsehoods no less incriminating, that he is compelled to believe Desdemona guilty. The evidence furnished by "honest Iago" would have convicted her of infidelity in a court of law.

As Ulrici remarks, "Othello nowhere gives utterance to jealousy before he is excited and spurred on to it by Iago. Not a word of anxiety, of uneasiness, or of suspicion passes his lips, not a thought of the possibility of Desdemona's infidelity is in his heart. Even Iago's assertions are by no means trusted at once; Othello demands proofs, striking, irresistible proofs. It is only when he thinks that he has the evidence clearly in his hands

that there first springs forth that jealousy which had hitherto existed but as a germ; being, however, matured by his hot blood, by his excitable feelings, and the glowing power of his imagination, it spreads like wild-fire. . . . But the man who has reasons for being jealous is himself not actually jealous. The nature of the passion consists rather in the fact that it invariably seeks for something where nothing is to be found. The passion of pain and anger about actual infidelity is as justifiable as that excited by any other moral offence committed by the one we love. Nevertheless Othello's pain and rage have externally the appearance of jealousy, partly on account of the vehemence with which he expresses himself, partly because the proofs are as yet proofs only for *him*, in reality no proofs, or because it is his misfortune to be inexpressibly belied and deceived."

It may be added that Iago is not only the most intellectual, but also one of the most voluble of Shakespeare's villains. He speaks 1117 lines ("Globe" numbering) or almost exactly one-third of all (3317) in the play. Only two characters in other plays exceed his record: Hamlet, with 1569 lines, and Richard III., with 1161. Henry V., with his 1063 lines, is the only other character, male or female, who has more than a thousand lines.

Whether *Macbeth* or *King Lear* was the next of the great tragedies is a disputed question. Both

were probably written in 1606 and 1607, but it is impossible to determine with absolute certainty which was the earlier.

*Macbeth* was first printed in the folio of 1623, having been registered in the books of the Stationers' Company as one of the plays "not formerly entered to other men." It must have been written between 1604 and 1610; the former limit being fixed by the allusion to the union of England and Scotland under James I. (iv. 1. 120), and the latter by the manuscript *Diary* of Dr. Simon Forman, who saw the play performed on the 20th of April, 1610. His account of it is as follows: —

"In Mackbeth at the Glob, 1610, the 20 of April, Saturday, ther was to be observed, firste, howe Mackbeth and Bancko, two noble men of Scotland, ridinge thorowe a wod, the<sup>s</sup> stode before them three women feiries or nimphes, and saluted Mackbeth, sayinge three tymes unto him, Haille, Mackbeth, King of Codon; for thou shall be a kinge, but shall beget no kinges, etc. Then said Bancko, what all to Mackbeth, and nothing to me? Yes, said the nimphes, haille to thee, Banko, thou shall beget kinges, yet be no kinge; and so they departed and cam to the courte of Scotland to Dunkin, King of Scotos, and yt was in the dais of Edward the Confessor. And Dunkin bad them both kindly wellcom, and made Mackbeth forthwith Prince of Northumberland, and sent him hom to his own castell, and appointed Mackbeth to provid for him, for he wold sup with him the next dai at night, and did soe. And Mackebeth contrived to kill



Dunkin, and thorowe the persuasion of his wife did that night murder the kinge in his own castell, beinge his guest; and ther were many prodigies seen that night and the dai before. And when Mack Beth had murdred the kinge, the blod on his handes could not be washed of by any means, nor from his wives handes, which handled the bluddi daggers in hiding them; by which means they became both moch amazed and affronted. The murder being knowen, Dunkins two sonnys fled, the on to England, the (other to) Walles, to save them selves. They beinge fled, they were supposed gnilty of the murder of their father, which was nothinge so. Then was Mackbeth crowned kinge; and then he, for feare of Banko, his old companion, that he should beget Kinges but be no kinge him self, he contrived the death of Banko, and caused him to be murdred on the way as he rode. The next night, beinge at supper with his noble men whom he had bid to a feaste, to the which also Banco should have com, he began to speake of noble Banco, and to wish that he wer ther. And as he thus did, standing up to drinck a carouse to him, the ghoste of Banco came and sate down in his cheier be-hiud him. And he, turninge about to sit down again, sawe the goste of Banco, which fronted him so, that he fell into a great passion of fear and fury, utteringe many wordes about his murder, by which, when they hard that Banco was murdred, they suspected Mackbet. Then Mack Dove fled to England to the kinges sonn, and soe they raised an army and cam into Scotland, and at Dunstonanyse overthruwe Mackbet. In the mean tyme, while Macdove was in England, Mackbet slew Macdoves wife and children, and after in the battelle Mackdove slewe Makcbet. Observe also howe Mackbetes quen did rise in the night in her slepe, and

walke and talked and confessed all, and the docter noted her wordes.”

The old physician and astrologer is not accurate in regard to some of the details of the plot; but he could hardly have been mistaken in stating that Macbeth and Banquo made their first appearance on horseback, a curious testimony to the rude endeavours of the stage-managers of the day to invest their representations with something of reality. The weird sisters were personated by men whose heads were disguised by grotesque periwigs. Forman's narrative decides a question, which has frequently been raised, as to whether the Ghost of Banquo is a true apparition or only the product of Macbeth's imagination. There is no doubt that the Ghost was personally introduced on the early stage as well as long afterwards, when the tragedy was revived by Davenant; but as it was the common belief in Shakespeare's day that spirits were generally visible only to those connected with their object or mission, an artificial stimulus to credulity in that direction was unnecessary in theatrical representations.

Some critics have thought that the play must have been a new one, since otherwise Forman “would scarcely have been at the pains to make an elaborate summary of the plot;” but this merely shows that the play was new to *him*, and that the story made a deep impression upon him.

It is probable that the tragedy was written in 1606 or 1607. The accession of James made Scottish subjects popular in England, and the tale of *Macbeth and Banquo* would be one of the first to be brought forward, as Banquo was held to be an ancestor of the new king. A Latin "interlude" on this subject was performed at Oxford in 1605, on the occasion of the king's visit to the city; but there is no reason for supposing, as Farmer did, that Shakespeare got the hint of his tragedy from that source.

It is barely possible that there was an earlier play on the subject of *Macbeth*. In the Registers of the Stationers' Company, under date of August 27, 1596, there is the entry of a "Ballad of Makdo-beth," which was not improbably a drama, rather than a "ballad" properly so called. The same piece seems to be referred to in Kemp's *Nine Days' Wonder* (1600), where it is called a "miserable stolne story," the work of "a penny Poet."

Steevens maintained that Shakespeare was indebted, in the supernatural parts of *Macbeth*, to *The Witch*, a play by Thomas Middleton, which was discovered in manuscript towards the close of the eighteenth century. Malone at first took the same view of the subject, but afterwards came to the conclusion that Middleton's play was the later production, and that he must therefore be the plagiarist. The Clarendon Press editors take the ground that there are portions of *Macbeth* which

Shakespeare did not write; that these were interpolated after the poet's death, or at least after he had ceased to be connected with the theatre; and that "the interpolator was, not improbably, Thomas Middleton." Fleay believes that the part of Hecate (which cannot be Shakespeare's) was supplied by Middleton; and also that the play as we have it is "abridged for the stage in an unusual degree."

The brevity and the imperfections of the play are more satisfactorily explained by the haste with which it was written. Graut White remarks: "It exhibits throughout the hasty execution of a grand and clearly conceived design. But the haste is that of a master of his art, who, with conscious command of its resources, and in the frenzy of a grand inspiration, works out his composition to its minutest detail of essential form, leaving the work of surface finish for the occupation of cooler leisure. What the Sistine Madonna was to Raphael, it seems that *Macbeth* was to Shakespeare — a magnificent impromptu; that kind of impromptu which results from the application of well-disciplined powers and rich stores of thought to a subject suggested by occasion. I am inclined to regard *Macbeth* as, for the most part, a specimen of Shakespeare's unelaborated, if not unfinished, writing, in the maturity and highest vitality of his genius. It abounds in instances of extremest compression and most daring ellipsis, while it exhibits in every scene a union of supreme dramatic and poetic power, and in almost

every line an imperially irresponsible control of language. Hence, I think, its lack of completeness of versification in certain passages, and also some of the imperfection of the text, the thought in which the compositors were not always able to follow and apprehend."

Shakespeare drew the materials of his plot from Holinshed's *Chronicles*, the first edition of which appeared in 1577, and the second in 1586-87. As he used the latter edition in writing *Richard II.* (see page 184 above) he doubtless used it also for *Macbeth*, which was written later. The main incidents are taken from Holinshed's account of two separate events — the murder of Duncan by Macbeth, and that of King Duffe, the great-grandfather of Lady Macbeth, by Donwald. Shakespeare has deviated in other respects from the chronicle, especially in the character of Banquo.

Although "the interest of *Macbeth* is not an *historical* interest," so that it matters little whether the action is true or has been related as true, it may be added that the story of the drama is almost wholly apocryphal. Sir Walter Scott says: —

"Macbeth broke no law of hospitality in his attempt on Duncan's life. He attacked and slew the king at a place called Bothgowan, or the Smith's House, near Elgin, in 1039, and not, as has been supposed, in his own castle of Inverness. The act was bloody, as was the complexion of the times; but, in very truth, the claim of Macbeth to the

throne, according to the rule of Scottish succession, was better than that of Duncan. As a king, the tyrant so much exclaimed against was, in reality, a firm, just, and equitable prince. Apprehensions of danger from a party which Malcolm, the eldest son of the slaughtered Duncan, had set on foot in Northumberland, and still maintained in Scotland, seem, in process of time, to have soured the temper of Macbeth, and rendered him formidable to his nobility. Against Macduff, in particular, the powerful Maormor of Fife, he had uttered some threats which occasioned that chief to fly from the Court of Scotland. Urged by this new counsellor, Siward, the Danish Earl of Northumberland, invaded Scotland in the year 1054, displaying his banner in behalf of the banished Malcolm. Macbeth engaged the foe in the neighbourhood of his celebrated castle of Dunsinane. He was defeated, but escaped from the battle, and was slain at Lumphanan in 1056."

In the way of concise general comments on the tragedy I know of nothing better than the following passage from the introduction to Mr. George Fletcher's discussion of it in his *Studies of Shakespeare*. (London, 1847), unfortunately long out of print:—

"*Macbeth* seems inspired by the very genius of the tempest. This drama shows us the gathering, the discharge, and the dispelling of a domestic and political storm, which takes its peculiar hue from the individual character of the hero. It is not

in the spirit of mischief that animates the 'weird sisters,' nor in the passionate and strong-willed ambition of Lady Macbeth, that we find the main-spring of this tragedy, but in the disproportioned though poetically tempered soul of Macbeth himself. A character like this, of extreme selfishness, with a most irritable fancy, must produce, even in ordinary circumstances, an excess of morbid apprehensiveness; which, however, as we see in him, is not inconsistent with the greatest physical courage, but generates of necessity the most entire moral cowardice. When, therefore, a man like this, ill enough qualified even for the honest and straightforward transactions of life, has brought himself to snatch at an ambitious object by the commission of one great sanguinary crime, the new and false position in which he finds himself by his very success will but startle and exasperate him to escape, as Macbeth says, from 'horrible imaginings' by the perpetration of greater and greater actual horrors, till inevitable destruction comes upon him amidst universal execration. Such, briefly, are the story and the moral of *Macbeth*. The passionate ambition and indomitable will of his lady, though agents indispensable to urge such a man to the one decisive act which is to compromise him in his own opinion and that of the world, are by no means primary springs of the dramatic action. Nor do the 'weird sisters' themselves do more than aid collaterally in impelling a man, the inherent evil of

whose nature and purpose has predisposed him to take their equivocal suggestions in the most mischievous sense. And, finally, the very thunder-cloud which, from the beginning almost to the ending, wraps this fearful tragedy in physical darkness and lurid glare, does but reflect and harmonize with the moral blackness of the piece."

*King Lear* was first published in quarto form in 1608, with the following title-page: —

"M. William Shak-speare: His True Chronicle, Historie of the life and death of King Lear and his three Daughters. With the vnfortunate life of Edgar, sonne and heire to the Earle of Gloster, and his sullen and assumed humor of Tom of Bedlam: As it was played before the Kings Maiestie at Whitehall vpon S. Stephans night in Christmas Hollidayes. By his Maiesties seruants playing vsually at the Gloabe on the Bancke-side. London, Printed for Nathaniel Butter, and are to be sold at his shop in Pauls Church-yard at the signe of the Pide Bull neere St. Austins Gate. 1608."

A second quarto edition was issued by the same publisher in the same year, the title-page of which is similar, except that it omits "and are to be sold . . . St. Austins Gate."

The text of the folio of 1623 is generally regarded as better than that of the quartos, and appears to have been printed from an independent manuscript. Each text, however, is valuable as supplying the deficiencies of the other. The quartos, according



to Furness, contain about two hundred and twenty lines that are not in the folios, and the folios fifty lines that are not in the quartos. One entire scene (iv. 3) is omitted in the folios. This discrepancy in the texts has been the subject of much investigation and discussion; and the critics differ widely in their explanations of it.

The date of the play cannot be earlier than 1603 nor later than 1606. The former limit is fixed by the publication of Dr. Harsnet's *Declaration of Popish Impostures*, from which Shakespeare got the names of some of the devils mentioned by Edgar in iii. 4; and the latter by the entry of the play in the Stationers' Registers, dated November 26, 1607, which states that it was performed "before the kinges maiestie at Whitehall vppon Sainet Stephens night at Christmas Last," that is, upon the 26th of December, 1606.

The story of King Lear and his three daughters is one of the oldest in English literature. It is told by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his *Historia Britonum*, by Layamon in his *Brut*, by Robert of Gloucester, by Fabyan in his *Chronicle*, by Spenser in the *Faerie Queene*, by Holinshed in his *Chronicle*, by Camden in his *Remaines*, in the *Mirroure for Magistrates*, in Warner's *Albions England*, and elsewhere in prose and verse. It had also been dramatized in the *Chronicle History of King Leir*, which is probably the same play that was entered in the Stationers' Registers in 1594, and that was reprinted

in 1605 — possibly on account of the success of Shakespeare's *Leir*, then just brought out. The author of this old play probably took the story from Holinshed, and Shakespeare drew either from the same source or from the old play. The portion of the plot in which Gloster figures was derived from Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*. But the poet's real debt to his predecessors is so insignificant that it is scarce worth tracing or recording. As Furness well says, "the distance is always immeasurable between the hint and the fulfilment; what to our purblind eyes is a bare, naked rock, becomes, when gilded by Shakespeare's heavenly alchemy, encrusted thick all over with jewels. When, after reading one of his tragedies, we turn to what we are pleased to call the 'original of his plot,' I am reminded of those glittering gems, of which Heine speaks, that we see at night in lovely gardens, and think must have been left there by kings' children at play; but when we look for these jewels by day we see only wretched little worms which crawl painfully away, and which the foot forbears to crush only out of strange pity."

The old play of *King Leir* is not so poor a thing as some of the critics have represented. Though almost infinitely below Shakespeare's tragedy, it has some features that place it above the average of contemporary dramatic productions. Campbell the poet, who was an excellent critic, calls it "simple and touching." He adds: "There is one scene in

it, the meeting of Cordelia with her father in a lonely forest, which, with Shakespeare's *Lear* in my heart, I could scarcely read with dry eyes." Nevertheless, as Campbell says, Shakespeare "has sublimated the old tragedy into a new one by an entire originality in the spiritual portraiture of its personages. . . . Wherever Shakespeare works on old materials, you will find him, not wiping dusted gold, but extracting gold from dust, where none but himself could have made the golden extraction."

One scene in the old play reminds me of Longfellow's *Miles Standish*, and Priscilla's "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?" The King of France and one of his nobles, disguised as pilgrims, fall in with Cordelia after her father has cast her off. They tell her that the King, whom she has not seen, is a suitor for her hand. But Cordelia says that she will not have him, adding with characteristic frankness: —

"Then be advised, palmer, what to do:  
Cease for thy king, seek for thyself to woo.

*King.* Your birth's too high for any but a king.

*Cordelia.* My mind is low enough to love a palmer."

The King soon reveals himself, and Cordelia gets a royal husband after all.

If Lear was a historical character, he is supposed to have lived in the eighth century, and that may well be the time of the dramatic action. Shakespeare appears to have purposely taken us back

into heathen and barbarous times. The whole atmosphere is pagan. There is not a single deliberate reference to Christianity or its institutions. Occasionally, as in the Roman plays, we meet with a careless or accidental allusion to something associated with Christian times — like the mention of a “godson” — but this is simply an illustration of the poet’s unscholarly habits, which often lead him into anachronisms. They do not make the play Christian any more than the allusion to “holy churchyards” in *Coriolanus* or to nunneries in the *Midsummer-Night’s Dream*. Lear himself is a barbarian monarch; Goneril, Regan, and Edmund are savages. The plucking out of Gloster’s eyes is a piece of savagery in keeping with the times. Even the better characters, like Kent, have a certain uncivilized impetuosity about them. The gods of the play are heathen gods. Astrology, though Edmund sneers at it, being an atheist, is a part of the general faith. As Kent says,

“ It is the stars,  
The stars above us, govern our conditions.”

Lear swears by —

“ the sacred radiance of the sun,  
The mysteries of Hecate and the night,  
By all the operations of the orbs,  
From whom we do exist and cease to be.”

It is also the Celtic race that we have to deal with, not the Saxon — a race “highly inflammable,

headstrong, flushed with sudden angers, and breaking out into wild violences, but also, in its better children at least, of a deep tenderness and sincerity; in short, a highly emotional race, quickly stirred to good and to evil; swift to love, swift to hate; blessing and cursing with the same breath; with eyes, now full of a gentle solicitude and regard, now flashing into an intolerable frenzy of detestation; a blind, hysterical race, if not wisely counselled and judiciously led; but under good auspices springing forward with a splendid vivacity to the highest prizes of glory and honour." Lear himself is the very type of this race; so is Kent; so is Cornwall: —

" You know the fiery quality of the duke,  
How unremovable and fixed he is  
In his own course."

And in Cordelia we see the same Celtic impulsiveness. She cannot control the indignation kindled in her soul by the false protestations of her sisters.

But to presume to comment upon *Lear* seems little short of profanity. One cannot but agree with Hazlitt, who says, in his *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*: "We wish that we could pass this play over and say nothing about it. All that we can say must fall far short of the subject, or even of what we ourselves conceive of it. To attempt to give a description of the play itself, or of its effect upon the mind, is mere impertinence; yet we must

say something. It is, then, the best of all Shakespeare's plays, for it is the one in which he was the most in earnest. He was here fairly caught in the web of his own imagination. The passion which he has taken as his subject is that which strikes its root deepest into the human heart, of which the bond is the hardest to be unloosed, and the cancelling and tearing to pieces of which gives the greatest revulsion to the frame. This depth of nature, this force of passion, this tug and war of the elements of our being, this firm faith in filial piety, and the giddy anarchy and whirling tumult of the thoughts at finding the prop failing it; the contrast between the fixed, immovable basis of natural affection and the rapid, irregular starts of imagination, suddenly wrenched from all its accustomed holds and resting-places in the soul — this is what Shakespeare has given, and what nobody else but he could give."

Coleridge remarks: "In the Shakespearian drama there is a vitality which grows and evolves itself from within, a key-note which guides and controls the harmonies throughout. What is *Lear*? It is storm and tempest — the thunder at first grumbling in the far horizon, then gathering around us, and at length bursting in fury over our heads — succeeded by a breaking of the clouds for a while, a last flash of lightning, the closing-in of night, and the single hope of darkness."

*Antony and Cleopatra*, first printed in the folio

of 1623, belongs to this same period, having been written probably in 1607 or early in 1608. There can be little doubt that it is the *Anthony and Cleopatra* entered on the Stationers' Registers, May 20th, 1608, by Edward Blount, one of the publishers of the folio. As no edition was brought out, it was re-entered by Blount as one of the plays in the folio "not formerly entered to other men."

For this, as for the other Roman plays, the poet drew his materials from Sir Thomas North's translation of Amyot's *Plutarch*, which he followed very closely. To earlier plays on the same subject (Daniel's *Cleopatra*, the Countess of Pembroke's *Tragedie of Antonie*, etc.) he evidently owed nothing.

Coleridge remarks: "The highest praise, or rather form of praise, of this play, which I can offer in my own mind, is the doubt which the perusal always occasions in me, whether the *Antony and Cleopatra* is not, in all exhibitions of a giant power in its strength and vigour of maturity, a formidable rival of *Macbeth*, *Lear*, *Hamlet*, and *Othello*. *Felicitæ audax* is the motto for its style comparatively with that of Shakspeare's other works, even as it is the general motto of all his works compared with those of other poets. . . . There is not one in which he has followed history so minutely, and yet there are few in which he impresses the notion of angelic strength so much — perhaps none in which he impresses it more strongly. This is greatly owing to

the manner in which the fiery force is sustained throughout, and to the numerous momentary flashes of nature counteracting the historic abstraction. As a wonderful specimen of the way in which Shakespeare lives up to the very end of this play, read the last part of the concluding scene. And if you would feel the judgment as well as the genius of Shakespeare in your heart's core, compare this astonishing drama with Dryden's *All for Love*."

Compare what Campbell the poet says of the play, and particularly the comparison with Dryden: —

"In Cleopatra, we can discern nothing materially different from the vouched historical sorceress; she nevertheless has a more vivid meteoric and versatile play of enchantment in Shakespeare's likeness of her than in a dozen of other poetical copies in which the artists took much greater liberties with historical truth: he paints her as if the gypsy herself had cast her spell over him, and given her own witchcraft to his pencil. At the same time, playfully interesting to our fancy as he makes this enchantress, he keeps us far from a vicious sympathy. The asp at her bosom, that lulls its nurse asleep, has no poison for our morality. A single glance at the devoted and dignified Octavia recalls our homage to virtue; but with delicate skill he withholds the purer woman from prominent contact with the wanton queen, and does not, like Dryden, bring the two to a scolding-match. The latter poet's *All for*



*Love* was regarded by himself as his masterpiece, and is by no means devoid of merit; but so inferior is it to the prior drama as to make it disgraceful to British taste for one hundred years that the former absolutely banished the latter from the stage. . . . Dryden's *Mark Antony* is a weak voluptuary from first to last. Not a sentence of manly virtue is ever uttered by him that seems to come from himself; and whenever he expresses a moral feeling, it appears not to have grown up in his own nature, but to have been planted there by his friend Ventidius, like a flower in a child's garden, only to wither and take no root. Shakespeare's *Antony* is a very different being. . . . A queen, a siren, a Shakespeare's *Cleopatra* alone could have entangled *Mark Antony*, while an ordinary wanton could have ensnared Dryden's hero."

Mrs. Jameson says of *Cleopatra*: "She has furnished the subject of two Latin, sixteen French, six English, and at least four Italian tragedies; yet Shakspeare alone has availed himself of all the interest of the story, without falsifying the character. He alone has dared to exhibit the Egyptian queen with all her greatness and all her littleness—all her frailties of temper—all her paltry arts and dissolute passions—yet preserved the dramatic propriety and poetical colouring of the character, and awakened our pity for fallen grandeur, without once beguiling us into sympathy with guilt and error."

*Coriolanus* probably followed hard upon *Antony and Cleopatra*, the date generally agreed upon by the critics being 1607 or 1608, though some make it 1609 or 1610. It was first printed in 1623, being one of the sixteen plays in the folio recorded as not previously "entered" to other publishers. As already stated, the historical materials were derived from North's *Plutarch*; and, as in the other Roman plays, Shakespeare followed his authority closely, often adopting even its phraseology. Some expressions in the fable told by Menenius (i. 1. 89 fol.) may have been suggested by the version in Camden's *Remains* (1605); but if Shakespeare was really indebted to that author, the obligation was at best but a trifling one.

Of the period in Shakespeare's career as a dramatist which has been considered in the present chapter, Baynes remarks: "During this period Shakespeare gained a disturbing insight into the deeper evils of the world, arising from the darker passions, such as treachery and revenge. But it is also clear that, with the larger vision of a noble, well-poised nature, he at the same time gained a fuller perception of the deeper springs of goodness in human nature, of the great virtues of invincible fidelity and unwearied love; and he evidently received not only consolation and calm but new stimulus and power from the fuller realisation of these virtues. The typical plays of this period thus embody Shakespeare's ripest experience of the

great issues of life. In the four grand tragedies the central problem is a profoundly moral one. It is the supreme internal conflict of good and evil amongst the central forces and higher elements of human nature, as appealed to and developed by sudden and powerful temptation, smitten by accumulated wrongs, or plunged in overwhelming calamities. As the result, we learn that there is something infinitely more precious in life than social ease or worldly success — nobleness of soul, fidelity to truth and honour, human love and loyalty, strength and tenderness, and trust to the very end.”

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE ROMANCES

THE transition from the tragedies to the plays that follow is most remarkable. From the gloom and horror of *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *Lear*, the poet emerges into the genial sunshine that irradiates the scenes of *Cymbeline*, *The Tempest*, and *The Winter's Tale*. Inexorable retribution for sin is no longer the keynote of his dramas, but charity, forgiveness, reconciliation, benignity almost divine. Dowden aptly calls these last plays "Romances." "In all there is a beautiful romantic background of sea or mountain. The dramas have a grave beauty, a sweet serenity, which seem to render the name 'comedies' inappropriate; we may smile tenderly, but we never laugh loudly, as we read them."

*Cymbeline* was first printed in 1623, and is the last play in the folio. The earliest allusion to it that has been discovered is in Dr. Forman's *Diary*, which belongs to the year 1610 and 1611. His sketch of the plot (not dated) is as follows: —

"Remember also the storri of Cymbalin king of England, in Lucius tyme, howe Lucius Cam from Octavus Cesar for Tribut, and being denied, after sent Lucius with

a greate Arme of Souldiars who landed at milford haven, and Affter wer vanquished by Cimbalin, and Lucius taken prisoner, and all by means of 3 outlawes, of the which 2 of them were the sonns of Cimbalin, stolen from him when they but 2 yers old by an old man whom Cymbalin banished, and he kept them as his own sonns 20 yers with him in A cave. And howe [one] of them slewe Clotan, that was the quens sonn, goinge To milford haven to sek the love of Innogen the kinges daughter, whom he had banished also for lovinge his daughter. and howe the Italian that cam from her love conveied him selfe into A Cheste, and said yt was a chest of plate sent from her love and others, to be presented to the kinge. And in the depest of the night, she being aslepe, he opened the cheste and cam forth of yt, And vewed her in her bed, and the markes of her body, and toke a-wai her braslet, and after Accused her of adultery to her love, etc. And in thend howe he came with the Romains into England and was taken prisoner, and after Reveled to Innogen who had turned her self into mans apparrell and fled to mete her love at milford haven, and chanced to fall on the Cave in the wodes wher her 2 brothers were, and howe by eating a sleping Dram they thought she had bin deed, and laid her in the wodes, and the body of cloten by her in her loves apparrell that he left behind him, and howe she was found by lucius, etc."

The play was probably a new one when Forman saw it in 1610 or 1611. The critics generally date it in 1609 or 1610. The internal evidence of style and metre indicates that it was one of the latest of the plays.

Shakespeare took the names of Cymbeline and his two sons from Holinshed, together with a few historical facts concerning the king; but the story of the stealing of the princes and their life in the wilderness appears to be his own.

The story of Imogen, which is so admirably interwoven with that of the sons of Cymbeline, was taken, directly or indirectly, from the *Decamerone* of Boccaccio, in which it forms the ninth novel of the second day. No English translation of it is known to have been made in Shakespeare's time. A version appeared in a tract entitled *Westward for Smelts*, which was published in 1620. Malone speaks of an edition of 1603; but this is probably an error, as the book was not entered upon the Stationers' Registers until 1619-20. This translation, moreover, lacks some important details which the play has in common with the Italian original.

Dr. Johnson says of *Cymbeline*: "This play has many just sentiments, some natural dialogues, and some pleasing scenes, but they are obtained at the expense of much incongruity. To remark the folly of the fiction, the absurdity of the conduct, the confusion of the names and manners of different times, and the impossibility of the events in any system of life, were to waste criticism upon unresisting imbecility, upon faults too evident for detection, and too gross for aggravation."

It was hardly necessary for Drake, in his *Shakespeare and his Times* (1817), to express astonishment

at this "sweeping condemnation," and to add: "Of the enormous injustice of this sentence nearly every page of *Cymbeline* will, to a reader of any taste or discrimination, bring the most decisive evidence. . . . Imogen, the most lovely and perfect of Shakespeare's female characters — the pattern of conjugal love and chastity, by the delicacy and propriety of her sentiments, by her sensibility, tenderness, and resignation, by her patient endurance of persecution from the quarter where she had confidently looked for endearment and protection — irresistibly seizes upon our affections. . . . When compared with this fascinating portrait, the other personages of the drama appear but in a secondary light. Yet are they adequately brought out and skilfully diversified: the treacherous subtlety of Iachimo; the sage experience of Belarius; the native nobleness of heart and innate heroism of mind which burst forth in the vigorous sketches of Guiderius and Arviragus; the temerity, credulity, and penitence of Posthumus; the uxorious weakness of Cymbeline; the hypocrisy of his Queen; and the comic arrogance of Cloten, half fool and half knave, produce a striking diversity of action and sentiment."

Malone decided that *The Tempest* was the last of Shakespeare's plays, and several of the more recent critics have agreed with him. Campbell, the poet, in 1838, said that the play had "a sort of sacredness as the last work of the mighty workman;" and

Lowell thought that in it "the great enchanter" was "bidding farewell to the scene of his triumphs." It is probable, however, that *The Winter's Tale* followed rather than preceded *The Tempest*, though both were quite certainly written in 1610 or early in 1611, and both were first printed in the folio of 1623.

*The Tempest* was acted before King James at Whitehall on the 1st of November, 1611, the forged record in the *Accounts of the Revels at Court* being founded upon correct information.

In 1610 Silvester Jourdan published a pamphlet entitled "A Discovery of the Barmudas, otherwise called the Ile of Divels: by Sir Thomas Gates, Sir George Sommers, and Captayne Newport, with divers others. London, 1610." This pamphlet tells of the tempest which scattered the fleet commanded by Somers and Gates, and the happy discovery, by some of the shipwrecked, of land which proved to be the Bermudas. It alludes to the general belief that these islands "were *never* inhabited by any Christian or heathen people," being "reputed a most *prodigious and enchanted* place," adding that, nevertheless, those who were cast away upon them, and lived there nine months, found the air temperate and the country "abundantly fruitful of all fit necessaries for the sustentation and preservation of man's life." Prospero's command to Ariel to "fetch dew from the still-vexed Bermoothes" proves that his island was not one of the Bermudas, but the



reference to them appears to have been suggested by Jourdan's narrative.

The plot of *The Tempest*, though it has not been traced to any foreign source, may have been borrowed from some old Italian or Spanish novel. Collins the poet told Thomas Warton that he had seen such a novel, with the title of *Aurelio and Isabella*, and that it was "printed in Italian, Spanish, French, and English, in 1588;" and Boswell says that a friend of his assured him that, some years before, he had "actually perused an Italian novel which answered to Collins's description." But Collins was insane when he made the statement, and Boswell's friend may have been mistaken; at any rate, the romance has not yet been found. There is an early German play (published in 1618) called *Die Schöne Sidea*, by Jacob Ayrer, a notary of Nuremberg, the plot of which has been imagined by several critics to be like that of *The Tempest*, and this has led them to suppose that the two were drawn from the same source; but the resemblance is far too slight to justify the conclusion.

As Ayrer died in 1605, he cannot have borrowed from Shakespeare; and it is highly improbable that Shakespeare could have been acquainted with the German play. For a full discussion of the matter, together with a complete translation of *Die Schöne Sidea*, see Furness's "New Variorum" ed. of *The Tempest*, pp. 324-343.

*The Tempest* is one of the shortest of the plays.

It contains but 2065 lines ("Globe" reckoning), a trifle more than half as many as *Hamlet*, which has 3930 lines. The only late play about as short is *Macbeth* (2108 lines), and the only shorter one is the very early *Comedy of Errors* (1778 lines). Some critics have thought that a part of *The Tempest* may have been lost, but its brevity appears to be chiefly due to the simplicity of the plot. It is difficult to see where additional scenes or parts of scenes could be appropriately introduced. Some scenes, indeed (ii. 1, for instance), seem to be somewhat "spun out," so to speak, that the play may be long enough for the stage; and the classical interlude may have been inserted for the same reason. The closing scene does not appear to be hastily finished, as in some of the plays, but is worked out with ample elaboration for theatrical effect. The play could hardly be lengthened unless by superfluous "padding."

*The Tempest* is also remarkable for being constructed with strict regard to the "unities" of place and time. The scene is one small island, and the whole period of the action does not much exceed three hours, as Shakespeare has indicated by three distinct references to the time in the last scene. The only other play in which these unities are observed is *The Comedy of Errors*, where the scene is confined to Ephesus, and the time is limited to the forenoon and afternoon of a single day.

In *The Tempest* the magic power of the poet is

strikingly shown in the variety of character and incident presented within these narrow limits of space and time; and this, too, without any violation of dramatic propriety or probability — indeed, with such extreme simplicity of plot that, when our attention is called to it, we are surprised to see how slight the story is, and how clearly its course is foreshadowed from almost the beginning.

Shakespeare has managed the supernatural part of the play in strict accordance with the theories of that day concerning magic, while at the same time he has avoided everything that was ridiculous or revolting in the popular belief. He thus exercises, as it were, a magic power over the vulgar magic, lifting it from prose into poetry; and while doing this he has contrived to make it so entirely consistent with what we can imagine to be possible to human science and skill that it seems as real as it is marvellous. It is at once supernatural and natural. It is the utmost power of the magic art, and yet it all goes on with no more jar to our credulity than the ordinary sequence of events in our everyday life.

Some of the critics, particularly those who take *The Tempest* to be the last of the plays, believe that Shakespeare intended to identify himself with Prospero, and in making him abjure his "rough magic" to indicate the close of his own career as a dramatist. But though Prospero seems more like the impersonation of Shakespeare than any other of his

characters, I cannot believe that he had any thought of self-portraiture in the delineation, or that the princely magician in breaking his staff and drowning his book represents the poet hinting at a purpose of ceasing to write. If the play was written in 1611, Shakespeare was then only forty-seven years old. He was in the maturity of his powers, and more favourably situated for exercising them in his chosen field of authorship than ever before. If he had not then left London for Stratford, he was on the point of escaping from the cares and distractions of his life in the metropolis, and retiring with a well-earned competency to the loved home of his youth. He seems to have been disposed to rest for a time after the labours and anxieties of the preceding twenty-five years, and apparently wrote no plays after returning to Stratford; but had he not been suddenly cut off at the very threshold of his fifty-third year, I believe we should have found that his magic staff was not broken nor the list of his enchanted creations completed.

It may be added that, although Prospero's references to giving up magic may lend a certain support to this notion that he speaks for Shakespeare, his closing speeches are not in keeping with that theory. If he is not older than the poet was when he wrote the play, his experiences have been more painful and more exhausting. Now that the welfare of his daughter is assured by her prospective union with Ferdinand, and the wrongs he had suffered are all

set right, he feels that the work of his life is accomplished; and he says:—

“ In the morn  
I ’ll bring you to your ship, and so to Naples,  
Where I have hope to see the nuptial  
Of these our dear-beloved solemnized ;  
And thence retire me to my Milan, where  
*Every third thought shall be my grave.*”

We cannot imagine Shakespeare saying this when he returned to Stratford to settle down at New Place.

*The Winter’s Tale* was apparently first printed in the folio of 1623, where it is the last of the “Comedies,” as *The Tempest* is the first.

Malone found a memorandum in the *Office Book* of Sir Henry Herbert, the Master of the Revels, which he gives as follows:—

“For the king’s players. An olde playe called Winter’s Tale, formerly allowed of by Sir George Bucke, and likewyse by mee on Mr. Hemmings his worde that there was nothing profane added or reformed, thogh the allowed booke was missinge, and therefore I returned it without a fee, this 19 of August, 1623.”

Malone also discovered that Sir George Buck did not obtain full possession of his office as Master of the Revels until August, 1610; and he therefore conjectured that *The Winter’s Tale* “was originally licensed in the latter part of that year or the begin-

ning of the next." This date is confirmed by the *Diary* of Doctor Forman, who writes about the play thus:—

"In the Winter's Talle at the Glob, 1611, the 15 of Maye, Wednesday,—observe ther howe Lyontes, the Kinge of Cicillia, was overcom with jelosy of his wife with the Kinge of Bohemia, his frind, that came to see him; and howe he contrived his death, and wold have had his cupberer to have poisoned, who gave the King of Bohemia waruing therof and fled with him to Bohemia. Remember also howe he sent to the orakell of Appollo, and the aunswer of Appollo that she was gittles, and that the king was jelouse, &c.; and howe, except the child was founnd againe that was loste, the kinge shuld die without yssne,—for the child was caried into Bohemia, and there laid in a forrest, and brought up by a sheppard, and the Kinge of Bohemia his sonn married that wentch; and howe they fled into Cicillia to Leontes, and the sheppard, having showed the letter of the nobleman by whom Leontes sent a . . . was that child, and the jewells found about her, she was knowen to be Leontes' daughter and was then 16 yers old. Remember also the rog that cam in all tottered like Coll Pipci; and howe he feyned him sicke, and to have bin robbed of all that he had; and howe he cosoned the por man of all his money, and after cam to the shep-shep with a pedler's packe, and ther cosoned them again of all their money; and howe he changed apparrell with the Kinge of Bohemia his sonn; and then howe he turned courtiar, &c. Beware of trustinge feined beggars or fawninge fellowse."

The play was also performed at Whitehall on the 5th of November the same year (1611). The entry in the *Accounts of the Revels*, like similar ones concerning *The Tempest*, *The Merchant of Venice* and other plays of Shakespeare, is a forgery, but has been shown to be founded on fact.

The story of *The Winter's Tale* is taken from Robert Greene's *History of Dorastus and Fawnia*, which appeared first in 1588, under the title of *Pandosto*, and passed through several editions. Shakespeare follows the novel in most particulars, but varies from it in a few of some importance. For instance, in the story as told by Greene, Bel-laria (Hermione) dies upon hearing of the loss of her son; and Pandosto (Leontes) falls in love with his own daughter, and is finally seized with a kind of melancholy or madness, in which he kills himself. The poet appears to have changed the *dénouement* because he was writing a comedy, not a tragedy.

It is hardly necessary to add that the poet's indebtedness to the novelist, as in so many other cases of the kind, is really insignificant. "Whatever the merits of Greene's work — and it is a good tale of its sort and its time, though clumsily and pedantically told — they are altogether different in kind (we will not consider the question of degree) from the merits of Shakespeare. In characterization of personages the tale is notably coarse and commonplace, in thought arid and barren, and in language alternately meagre and inflated; whereas there are

few more remarkable creations in all literature than Hermione, Perdita, Autolycus, Paulina, not to notice minor characters; and its teeming wealth of wisdom, and the daring and dainty beauty of its poetry, give the play a high place in the second rank of Shakespeare's works. Briefly, it is the old story over again: the dry stick that seems to bloom and blossom is but hidden by the leafy luxuriance and floral splendour of the plant that has been trained upon it."

Every reader of the play will heartily endorse what Furnivall says of it:—

"Though Mamillius tells us that 'a sad tale's best for winter,' yet, notwithstanding all Hermione's suffering, and the death of her gallant boy, who used to frighten her with goblin stories, we cannot call Shakspeare's *Winter's Tale* sad. It is so fragrant with Perdita and her primroses and violets, so happy in the reunion and reconciliation of her and her father and mother, so bright with the sunshine of her and Florizel's young love, and the merry roguery of that scamp Autolycus, that none of us can think of *The Winter's Tale* as a 'sad tale' or play.

"The last complete play of Shakspeare's as it is, the golden glow of the sunset of his genius is over it, the sweet country air all through it; and of few, if any, of his plays is there a pleasanter picture in the memory than of *Winter's Tale*. As long as men can think, shall Perdita brighten and sweeten, Hermione



ennoble, men's minds and lives. How happily, too, it brings Shakspeare before us, mixing with his Stratford neighbours at their sheep-shearing and country sports, enjoying the vagabond pedlar's gammon and talk, delighting in the sweet Warwickshire maidens, and buying them 'fairings,' telling goblin stories to the boys, 'There was a man dwelt by a churchyard,' — opening his heart afresh to all the innocent mirth, and the beauty of nature around him. . . . Its purpose, its lesson, are to teach forgiveness of wrongs, not vengeance for them; to give the sinner time to repent and amend, not to cut him off in his sin; to frustrate the crimes he has purposed. And as in *Cymbeline*, father and injured daughter meet again, she forgiving her wrongs; as there, too, friends meet again, the injured friend forgiving his wrongs, so here do lost daughter, injured daughter, and injuring father meet, he being forgiven; so injured friend forgiving meets injuring friend forgiven; while above all rises the figure of the noble, long-suffering wife Hermione, forgiving the base though now repentant husband who had so cruelly injured her. . . . Hermione is, I suppose, the most magnanimous and noble of Shakspeare's women; without a fault, she suffers, and for sixteen years, as if for the greatest fault. . . . Combined with this noble, suffering figure of Hermione, and her long-sundered married life, is the sweet picture of Perdita's and Florizel's love and happy future. Shakspeare shows us more of Perdita than of Miranda; and heavenly

as the innocence of Miranda was, we yet feel that Perdita comes to us with a sweeter, more earth-like charm, though not less endowed with all that is pure and holy, than her sister of the imaginary Mediterranean isle. . . . Not only do we see Shakspeare's freshness of spirit in his production of Perdita, but also in his creation of Autolycus. That, at the close of his dramatic life, after all the troubles he had passed through, Shakspeare had yet the youngness of heart to bubble out into this merry rogue, the incarnation of fun and rascality, and let him sail off successful and unharmed, is wonderful. And that there is no diminution of his former comic power is shown, too, in his Clown, who wants but something to be a reasonable man."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### PLAYS OF MIXED OR DOUBTFUL AUTHORSHIP

It is now generally agreed that certain of the plays included in the standard editions of Shakespeare are not wholly his, but are partly the work of other dramatists. The earliest plays of this class, belonging to the period of his dramatic apprenticeship, when he was employed by theatrical managers to revise or touch up old pieces for a new lease of life on the stage—*Titus Andronicus* and the three Parts of *Henry VI.*—have been already considered; as well as the somewhat later *Taming of the Shrew*, in which he had a more important share. To these are to be added three plays of the last periods of his career—*Timon of Athens*, *Pericles*, and *Henry VIII.*—in all of which he certainly had a considerable share, though the critics differ more or less in their explanations of the divided authorship. *The Two Noble Kinsmen* is another play which some critics believe to be partly Shakespeare's, and which is included in several of the more recent editions.

*Timon of Athens* was first printed in 1623, having been entered upon the Stationers' Registers in

November of that year, by the publishers of the folio, among the plays "not formerly entered to other men."

The critics are almost unanimous in deciding that the play is Shakespeare's only in part, but they do not agree as to its probable history. Knight, the Cambridge editors, and a few others believe that the dramatist revamped an earlier play, parts of which, for some reason or other, he retained with slight alteration. On the other hand, the majority of editors, including Gollancz and Herford, the latest, regard it as an original work of Shakespeare's, which he laid aside or left unfinished, and which was completed by an inferior writer. There are difficulties in either theory, but the latter is by far the more probable.

There is little difficulty in separating Shakespeare's part of *Timon* from that of the other writer, and there would be less or none were it not that in some scenes we have the work of the two hands mixed, the finisher of the play having attempted to rewrite portions of it, but blending more or less of the original gold with his own baser metal. We can see that the gold is there, but cannot separate it from the alloy. Fleay has edited what he believes to be Shakespeare's *Timon* for the New Shakspeare Society, and it may be found in their *Transactions* for 1874.

The date of Shakespeare's part of the play can be fixed only by the internal evidence of style, measure,

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etc. This appears to put it not earlier than 1606, nor later than 1608. The date of the completion of the work cannot be fixed even approximately.

Shakespeare was acquainted with the story of Timon through Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*, from which he had taken the plot of *All's Well*, and through a passage in Plutarch's *Life of Antonius*, which he had used in *Julius Cæsar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. An earlier play on the same subject has come down to our day in manuscript; though in the opinion of Dyce (who edited the piece for the Shakespeare Society in 1842) this was never performed in London, being intended solely for an academic audience, and it is improbable that Shakespeare ever saw it. The writer who completed the play seems to have been acquainted with Lucian's *Dialogue* on Timon, which had not then, so far as we know, been translated into English; but he may have got this part of his material through some version of the story (possibly a dramatized one) that has been lost. Allusions to Timon are rather frequent in writers of the time. Shakespeare himself refers to "critic Timon" in *Love's Labour's Lost* (iv. 3. 170), one of his earliest productions.

*Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, was first published in quarto in 1609, with the following title-page: —

"The Late And much admired Play called Pericles, Prince of Tyre; with the true Relation of the whole Historie, adventures, and fortunes of the said Prince; as also, The no lesse strange and worthy

accidents in the Birth and Life of his Daughter Mariana, — as it hath been diuers and sundry times acted by his Maiesties Seruants, at the Globe on the Banck-side. By William Shakespeare.”

Other quartos were published in the same year, and in 1611, 1619, 1630, and 1635.

The play was not included in either the first or the second (1632) folio, but was reprinted, with six plays wrongly attributed to Shakespeare, in the third folio (1664) and the fourth (1635). The folio text is from the quarto of 1635.

Rowe included *Pericles* in both his editions (1709 and 1714), but it was rejected by Pope and subsequent editors down to the time of Malone, who put it in his Supplement to Steevens's edition of 1778, and in his own edition of 1790. Steevens followed his example in 1793, and has been followed by all the recent editors except Keightley.

It is now generally agreed by the critics that the first two acts of the play, together with the brothel scenes in the fourth act, were written by some other author than Shakespeare. “What remains is the pure and charming romance of Marina, the sea-born child of Pericles, her loss, and the recovery of both child and mother by the afflicted prince.” Whether the poet enlarged and reconstructed an earlier play, or some other writer or writers filled out an unfinished work of his, we cannot positively decide, but the latter seems by far the more reasonable hypothesis.

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The date of the play in its present form is probably about 1607. It was first printed, as we have seen, in 1609, but it was entered on the Stationers' Registers on the 20th of May, 1608. If, as Fleay tells us, the second scene of the third act is "palpably imitated in *The Puritan* (iv. 3)," which was acted in 1606, the date of *Pericles* cannot be later than that year.

The story upon which the play is founded is given in Laurence Twine's *Patterne of Paineiful Aduenters*, first published in 1576, and in the tale of *Appolinus the Prince of Tyr*, which forms a part of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*. Twine's novel is said to have been merely a reprint of the English translation (printed in 1510) of the French version of the story by Robert Copland. It was taken originally from the *Gesta Romanorum*, but the narrative there was only one of three Latin versions, all of which appear to have been based on a Greek tale of the fifth or sixth century of the Christian era. Gower acknowledges his indebtedness to

"a cronique in daies gone,  
The wich is cleped Panteon ;"

that is, the Latin *Pantheon* of Godfrey of Viterbo, who wrote in the latter half of the 12th century.

In 1608 George Wilkins published a novel which was avowedly based on the acted play. The title-page was as follows:—

"The Painful Aduentures of Pericles Prince of

Tyre. Being The true History of the Play of *Pericles*, as it was lately presented by the worthy and ancient Poet Iohn Gower."

We may fairly infer from the language of this title-page that the play was then a comparatively new one, and that the date given above (1607, or possibly 1606) cannot be far astray.

During the seventeenth century there is abundant contemporary evidence that *Pericles* was indeed, as its title-pages assert it to have been, a "much-admired play." Ben Jonson growled at it as "a mouldy tale," made up of "scraps out of every dish." But this was when, prematurely old, poor, and mortified at public injustice, he poured forth his "just indignation at the vulgar censure of his play, by malicious spectators;" and in doing so he bears strong testimony that the public judgment as to *Pericles* was the reverse of his own — that it "kept up the play-club," and was the favourite dramatic repast to the exclusion of his own "well-ordered banquet," in what he denounced (in his *Ode to Himself*) as "a loathsome age," when

" sweepings do as well "

As the best-ordered meal;  
For who the relish of such guests would fit,  
Needs set them but the alms-basket of wit."

Ben's frank and friendly admonitor, the moralist Owen Feltham, replies by reminding him that there



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were scenes and jokes in his own unfortunate play (the *New Inn*), that

“throw a stain  
Through all the unlucky plot, and do displeas  
As deep as *Pericles* ;”

thus giving an additional testimony that the faults of *Pericles* did not escape the critical eye, while they pleased the many. Thus the play kept possession of the stage to the days of Addison, when *Pericles* was one of the favourite parts of Betterton. Dryden, who lived near enough to the author's time to have learned the stage tradition from contemporaries, while he evidently perceived the imperfections of this piece, never doubted its authenticity, and accounted for its inferiority to the greater tragedies, by considering them the consequences of the author's youthful inexperience (Prologue to Davenant's *Circe*, 1675):—

“Shakespeare's own muse her *Pericles* first bore ;  
The Prince of Tyre was elder than the Moor :  
'Tis miracle to see a first good play ;  
All hawthorns do not bloom on Christmas day.”

This was in 1675, and the play continued to be regarded as Shakespeare's until 1709, when Rowe, as already stated, included it in his edition. But, instead of apparently regarding it as a youthful production of the dramatist, as Dryden had done, he said that “it is owned that some part of *Pericles*

was written by him, particularly the last scene," implying that the rest was by some inferior playwright. Pope, in his preface, said he had "no doubt that these wretched plays, *Pericles*, *Lochrine*, *Sir John Oldcastle*, etc., etc., cannot be admitted as his." His successors who excluded it did so without comment, and until the time of Malone the critics and writers upon the English drama treated it only as a play once erroneously attributed to Shakespeare. Malone declared that it was "the entire work of Shakespeare, and one of his earliest compositions." Steevens, on the other hand, said of it: "The drama contains no discrimination of manners (except in the comic dialogues), very few traces of original thought, and is evidently destitute of that intelligence and useful knowledge that pervade even the meanest of Shakespeare's undisputed performances." After analyzing the plot at some length, he concludes by expressing his belief "that our great poet had no share in constructing it." This decision long remained unquestioned. Hallam, indeed, thought that many passages in it were more in Shakespeare's manner than that of any contemporary writer, but that it was "full of evident marks of an inferior hand." Gifford rejected it and called it "the worthless *Pericles*."

Godwin, in his *Life of Chaucer* (1803), incidentally referring to *Pericles*, terms it "a beautiful drama, which in sweetness of manner, delicacy of

description, truth of feeling, and natural ease of language, would do honour to the greatest author that ever existed." Mr. B. W. Procter ("Barry Cornwall") insists that "the merit and style of the work sufficiently denote the author," who "was and is, beyond all competition, the greatest poet that the world has ever seen."

Verplanck (in 1847), after referring to the theory that *Pericles* was one of the very earliest of Shakespeare's plays, "perhaps an almost boyish work," was inclined to adopt the theory that "the original *Pericles* was by some inferior hand, perhaps by a personal friend of Shakespeare's, and that he, without remodelling the plot, undertook to correct and improve it, beginning with slight additions, and his mind, warming as he proceeded, breaking out towards the close of the drama with its accustomed vigour and abundance."

The fatal objection to this hypothesis is that the first two acts of the play are so uniformly and so abominably bad that we cannot imagine Shakespeare undertaking to revise such a play and leaving two entire acts in their original condition.

There is the same insuperable objection to the theory that *Pericles* was written by Shakespeare and another writer working together—a theory which, strangely enough, has been revived by Mr. Lee, who says that Shakespeare "reverted in the year following the colossal effort of *Lear* (1607) to his earlier habit of collaboration, and with

another's aid composed two dramas — *Timon of Athens* and *Pericles*." Is it conceivable that the author of *Lear* would collaborate with one who could write the first two acts of *Pericles*, or that after allowing his partner to write those acts without aid or advice from himself (for there is not a line in them which he could have written or even retouched) he accepted or approved them, and then began work himself on the third act in the grand style of that period in his own career?

This theory, moreover, as well as the theory that Shakespeare finished or revised a play by somebody else, assumes, as Fleay has said, that the dramatist "deliberately chose a story of incest, which, having no tragic horror in it, would have been rejected by Ford or Massinger, and grafted on this a filthy story, which, being void of humour, would even have been rejected by Fletcher."

The one theory that explains all the facts in the case, and also the perplexity that these facts have caused the critics, is thus stated by Fleay: "Shakespeare wrote the story of Marina, in the last three acts, minus the prose scenes and the Gower. This gives a perfect artistic and organic whole, and, in my opinion, ought to be printed as such in every edition of Shakespeare: the whole play, as it stands, might be printed in collections for the curious, and there only. But this story was not enough for filling the necessary five acts from which Shakespeare never deviated; he therefore left it unfinished, and

used the arrangement of much of the later part in the end of *The Winter's Tale*, which should be carefully compared with this play. The unfinished play was put into the hands of another of the 'poets' attached to the same theatre, and the greater part of the present play was the result; this poet having used the whole story as given in Gower and elsewhere."

It is not necessary to assume that this hypothesis is correct in all its details. The essential point is that an unfinished play of Shakespeare's was finished by somebody else; not that he finished or revised a play by somebody else.

We may be sure, however, that Shakespeare had nothing whatever to do with the completion of the play. It is inconceivable that he could have consented to its being completed by such a person as did it or in the way in which he did it.

Delius and Fleay agree that the person who wrote acts i. and ii. and the Gower matter was George Wilkins, who wrote the novel based on the play. Fleay believes that the offensive prose scenes were the work of W. Rowley. He discovered that about the time when *Pericles* was written Wilkins, Rowley, and John Day collaborated in writing *The Travels of the Three English brothers, Sir Thomas, Sir Anthony, and Sir Robert Shirley, an Historical Play*, printed in 1607.

In the discussion that followed the reading of Fleay's paper on *Pericles* before the New Shakespeare Society, May 8th, 1874, Furnivall said: —

“I hope the fact I am going to mention will render all further discussion as to the Shakspeare part of the *Pericles* unnecessary. When I first saw Mr. Tennyson last winter — after many years’ occasional correspondence — he asked me, during our talk, whether I had ever examined *Pericles* with any care. I had to confess that I’d never read it, as some friends whom I considered good judges had told me it was very doubtful whether Shakspeare wrote any of it. Mr. Tennyson answered, ‘O, that won’t do! He wrote all the part relating to the birth and recovery of Marina, and the recovery of Thais. I settled that long ago. Come up-stairs, and I’ll read it to you.’ Up-stairs to the smoking-room in Seamore Place we went, and there I had the rare treat of hearing the poet read in his deep voice — with an occasional triumphant ‘Isn’t *that* Shakspeare? what do you think of it?’ and a few comments — the genuine part of *Pericles*. I need not tell you how I enjoyed the reading, or how quick and sincere my conviction of the genuineness of the part read was.”

The parts read by Tennyson were almost exactly the same that Fleay had marked as Shakespeare’s; and, as Furnivall adds, “the independent confirmation of the poet-critic’s result by the metrical-test-worker’s process is most satisfactory and interesting.”

*Henry VIII.*, under the title of “The Famous History of the Life of King Henry the Eighth,”

was first published in the Folio of 1623, where it is printed with remarkable accuracy.

The date of the play has been the subject of much discussion. The earlier editors and commentators, with the single exception of Chalmers, believed that it was written before the death of Elizabeth (March, 1603), and that the allusion to her successor, "Nor shall this peace sleep with her," etc. (v. 5), did not form a part of Cranmer's speech as originally composed, but was interpolated by Ben Jonson after James had come to the throne. But, as White remarks, "the speech in question is homogeneous and Shakespearian; the subsequent allusion to Elizabeth as 'an aged princess' would not have been ventured during her life; and the exhibition of Henry's selfish passion for Anne Bullen, and of her lightness of character, would have been hardly less offensive to the Virgin Queen, her daughter."

In the Stationers' Registers, under date of February 12th, 1604 [-5], we find the following memorandum: "Nath. Butter] Yf he get good allowance for the Enterlude of K. Henry 8th before he begyn to print it, and then procure the wardens hands to yt for the entrance of yt, he is to have the same for his copy;" and some editors have thought that the entry refers to Shakespeare's drama. It is more probable, however, that the reference is to a play of Samuel Rowley's, "When you See me you Know me, or the Famous Chronicle History of King Henry the Eighth," which was published in 1605.

Knight, White, and Hudson believe that the play was written at Stratford in 1612 or 1613, and that it was the poet's last work. The weight of evidence, both external and internal, seems to be in favour of this opinion.

The Globe Theatre was burned down on the 29th of June, 1613, and we have several contemporary accounts of the catastrophe. A letter from John Chamberlain to Sir Ralph Winwood, dated July 12th, 1613, describes the burning, and says that it "fell out by a peale of chambers" — that is, a discharge of small cannon. Howes, in his continuation of Stowe's *Annales*, written some time after the fire (since he speaks of the theatre as rebuilt "the next spring"), says that the house was "filled with people, to behold the play, viz., of *Henry the Eighth*." There can be little doubt that the play in question was Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, in which, according to the original stage direction (iv. 1), we have "chambers discharged" at the entrance of the king to the "mask at the cardinal's house."

The critics are now generally agreed that portions of *Henry VIII* were written by John Fletcher. Mr. Roderick, in notes appended to Edwards's *Canons of Criticism* (edition of 1765), was the first to point out certain peculiarities in the versification of the play — the frequent occurrence of a redundant or eleventh syllable, of pauses nearer the end of the verse than usual, and of "emphasis clashing with the cadence of the metre." More recently two critics,



working independently, divided the play between Shakespeare and Fletcher in the same manner, assigning certain scenes to each author, on account of differences in the versification and diction; and a study of the dramatic treatment and characterization by these and other critics led to precisely the same results. Mr. James Spedding, who was the first (1850) to discuss the question at length, and to divide the play in this manner, afterward stated that the resemblance to Fletcher's style in parts of the play was pointed out to him several years before by Tennyson; and it is a curious fact that Ralph Waldo Emerson, in his lecture on Shakespeare (published in 1850 before he could have seen the articles by Spedding and Hickson, the other critic who had divided the play, and written several years before it was published), also noted the evidences of two hands in *Henry VIII*. He says, after referring to Malone's discussion of the double authorship of *Henry VI*: "In *Henry VIII*. I think I see plainly the cropping out of the original rock on which his [Shakespeare's] stratum was laid. The first play was written by a superior, thoughtful man with a vicious ear. I can mark his lines, and know well their cadence. - See Wolsey's soliloquy and the following scene with Cromwell, where, instead of the metre of Shakespeare, whose secret is that the thought constructs the tune, so that reading for the sense will best bring out the rhythm, here the lines are constructed on a given tune, and the verse

has even a trace of pulpit eloquence. But the play contains, through all its length, unmistakable traits of Shakespeare's hand, and some passages are like autographs." The passages which Emerson ascribes to the "man with a vicious ear" are all among those which Spedding and others decide to be Fletcher's. People with no ear — or ears too long — may sneer at verse tests as they please; but when poets like Tennyson and Emerson come to the same conclusions as the "metre-mongers" and other critics, we may safely assume that these conclusions are probably correct.

As in the case of the plays already considered, various theories concerning the double authorship of *Henry VIII.* have been proposed. Some critics think that it was an instance of collaboration; but it is more probable, as the majority believe, that Fletcher completed an unfinished play of Shakespeare's. Three or four take the ground that Shakespeare was the sole author; one (Mr. Robert Boyle, in the *Transactions* of the New Shakspeare Society, for 1880-5) argues that the play was written by Fletcher and Massinger, and that Shakespeare had nothing to do with it.

Mr. Lee is inclined to ascribe Wolsey's famous "Farewell" to Shakespeare; but, as Dowden says: "It is certainly Fletcher's, and when one has perceived this, one perceives also that it was an error ever to suppose it written in Shakespeare's manner."

*The Two Noble Kinsmen* was first printed, so far

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as we know, in 1634, in quarto form, and with the following title-page:—

“The Two Noble Kinsmen: Presented at the Blackfriars by the Kings Maiesties servants, with great applause: Written by the memorable Worthies of their time;

{ M<sup>r</sup>. *John Fletcher*, and }  
{ M<sup>r</sup>. *William Shakspeare*. } Gent.”

The play also appeared in the second (1679) edition of Beaumont and Fletcher's dramas, being one of “no fewer than seventeen plays more than were in the former” (the first folio, of 1647), as the preface tells us. It was not admitted to the third and fourth Shakespeare folios (published after the appearance of the play in 1634), nor to any other collected edition of Shakespeare until 1857. Somewhat earlier in the nineteenth century certain critics began to suspect a double authorship, and Lamb and Coleridge, among others, decided that the old title-page was correct in assigning a share in the work to Shakespeare. In 1833 Mr. William Spalding published an elaborate analysis of the play, allotting to Shakespeare and Fletcher their respective portions, and Hallam, Dyce, and other critics and commentators became converts to his views. Dyce included the play in his edition, as Hudson did in his second edition, and as I did in mine. But Spalding in 1840 “weakened” considerably in his opinions concerning the play, and later declared the problem of its authorship insoluble. Other

critics who at first agreed with him have had a similar experience. For myself, at present I think it very doubtful whether Shakespeare had anything whatever to do with the play. Mr. Lee, however, decides that "frequent signs of Shakespeare's workmanship are unmistakable." Some critics are of the opinion that Massinger wrote the parts that have been assigned to Shakespeare.

*Edward III.* is another play in which some critics believe that Shakespeare had a hand, if, indeed, as a few of them think, it is not wholly his. It was entered on the Stationers' Registers, December 1st, 1595, and was published in quarto the next year, with the title, "The Raigne of King Edward the third: as it hath been sundrie times plaied about the Citie of London." Another edition was printed in 1599; and there is reason to believe that others appeared in 1597, 1617, and 1625, but no copies of these are now extant.

It was ascribed to Shakespeare as early as 1656 in a list of plays appended to Goff's *Careless Shepherd*; but the list is in other respects so palpably inaccurate that no authority can be accorded to it. Capell, in 1760, published it in his *Provolusiones* as "a play thought to be writ by Shakespeare." That it was not recognized as such in the poet's day is evident from its not being mentioned in Meres's list in 1598, nor included in any of the four folio editions.

Collier in 1874 advocated the theory that the

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whole play is Shakespeare's, and some of the German critics hold the same opinion. The larger number, however, ascribe to him only the episode of the King's love for the Countess of Salisbury, which occupies the latter half of act i. and the whole of act ii. This is awkwardly introduced, and interrupts the main action; and it is, moreover, so markedly superior to the rest of the play that it is quite certainly by another hand. It also contains (ii. 1. 451) a whole line, "Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds," which occurs in Shakespeare's 94th Sonnet, and the expression "scarlet ornaments" (ii. 1. 10), which is found in the 142d Sonnet—applied there to lips, but in the play to cheeks. If the *Sonnets* were written in 1592 or 1593, as Mr. Lee supposes, the author of the play must have been the borrower; but if they were not written until 1597 or later, it must have been Shakespeare. Many parallelisms between *Edward III.* and Shakespeare plays of later date (*The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*, for instance) have also been pointed out, which prove that the great dramatist was well acquainted with the anonymous play, whether he was the author of the love-episode in it or not. Probably he was not, for the episode is, after all, not in the manner of Shakespeare. It is difficult, indeed, to ascribe it to any other dramatist of the time; but, as Furnivall says, "there were doubtless one-play men in those days, as there have been one-book men since."

In the seven plays added to the folio of 1664, with the exception of *Pericles*, Shakespeare can have had no share whatever; and the same may be said of *Mucedorus*, *Fair Em*, and sundry other plays assigned to him during his life by unscrupulous publishers, or afterwards by injudicious critics.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### DOMESTIC MATTERS, 1606-1616

DURING the latter half of the year 1606 the King's Company were playing in the provinces. They were at Oxford in July, at Leicester in August, at Dover in September, and on unrecorded dates at Maidstone, Saffron Walden, and Marlborough. In December they had returned to London, and in the Christmas holidays (December 26th) performed *Lear* before King James at Whitehall.

The year 1607 was an eventful one in the poet's domestic annals. On the 5th of June his eldest daughter Susanna, then a little more than twenty-four years of age (baptized May 26th, 1583), was married at Stratford to Dr. John Hall, who afterwards attained to considerable eminence as a physician. Little is known of his previous history except that he was born in 1575, and was probably connected with the Halls of Acton, near London, where, according to his will of 1635, he owned a house which he bequeathed to his daughter. A John Hall of Acton was married there in September, 1574, and his daughter Elizabeth was baptized in June, 1575. It is possible that Dr. John Hall's

daughter was named for her; but Hall being an extremely common name in England, and Elizabeth being also very common, this coincidence may have been accidental.

In his early days Dr. Hall had travelled on the Continent, and had become proficient in the French language. It is not known when he came to Stratford, but it was probably not long before his marriage, as no notice of him is found in the local records before that time. In 1611 his name occurs in a list of persons interested in a highway bill, and in 1612 he leased from the corporation a piece of woodland on the outskirts of the town. Tradition says that he resided in the street known as Old Town, and a house still standing there is pointed out as the one he occupied.

Late in this same year (1607) Shakespeare's brother Edmund died in London, and was buried on the 31st of December in the church of St. Saviour's, Southwark, "with a forenoone knell of the great bell." It may fairly be assumed, as Halliwell Philipps remarks, that "the burial in the church, a mark of respect which was seldom paid to an actor, and which added very considerably to the expenses of the funeral, resulted from the poet's own affectionate directions; while the selection of the morning for the ceremony, then unusual at St. Saviour's, may have arisen from a wish to give some of the members of the Globe company the opportunity of attendance." Edmund is described in the parish register as



“a player,” and was in his twenty-eighth year (baptized May 3d, 1580) at the time of his death. He had probably come to London and entered the theatre through his brother’s influence, but no notice of him as an actor has been discovered.

Elizabeth, the only child of the Halls, was baptized on the 21st of February, 1608. The poet thus became a grandfather about two months before he was forty-four years old. She appears to have inherited his shrewd business ability, but nothing else is known of her character. As we shall see, she lived to be his last lineal descendant.

In September, 1608, Shakespeare lost his mother. Her burial is recorded on the 9th of the month in the parish register thus: “Mayry Shaxpere, wydowe.” The poet was probably in Stratford at the time of the funeral, and he may not have returned to London until after the 16th of October, when he was the principal godfather at the baptism of the William Walker to whom in 1616 he bequeathed “twenty shillings in gold.” This child was the son of Henry Walker, a mercer and a local alderman.

On the 29th of October the King’s Company were playing in Coventry, thirteen miles from Stratford. At some other time in the year they were at Marlborough, in Wiltshire.

In 1610 Shakespeare added to his investments in real estate by the purchase of twenty acres of pasture land from the Combes, adding them to the 107 acres he had bought from the same parties in

1602. In the same year the King's Company were at Dover in July, at Oxford in August, and at some unrecorded date at Shrewsbury.

In February, 1612, the town council of Stratford resolved that plays were unlawful, and "the sufferance of them against the orders heretofore made, and against the example of other well-governed cities and boroughs." It is therefore decided that the penalty of ten shillings imposed on players in an order of 1602 be raised to ten pounds. It is said that ten years later (1622) the King's Company were actually bribed by the council to leave the town without playing. The town records state that six shillings was "payd to the Kinges players for not playinge in the hall." This "was obviously the result of a deference to the Court, it being no doubt considered imprudent to permit the royal servants to depart without a compensation for their unceremonious dismissal." They were evidently regarded as a privileged company, for at a Court Baron held in October, 1616, at the neighbouring town of Henley-in-Arden, an order was unanimously passed by the leading inhabitants that no other actors should have the use of their town-hall.

In the parish register at Stratford, under date of February 3d, 1612, we find the record of the burial of "Gilbertus Shakspeare, adolescens." It is doubtful whether this can refer to the poet's brother Gilbert, who was baptized October 13th, 1566, and would therefore have been more than

forty-five years old in February, 1612. He is described in a record of 1597 as being a haberdasher in the parish of St. Bridget, London. In May, 1602, he was in Stratford, acting for his brother William in a conveyance of land. He is next heard of as a witness to a local deed of 1609, in which his signature is so well written as to indicate that he had been educated at the Grammar School in his native town. Nothing further is known about him, and he is not mentioned in the poet's will. Malone, who seldom, if ever, makes a statement of the kind without substantial evidence, says that Gilbert "certainly died before his son;" but there is no record of his marriage or of the birth of a son, who, if living when the poet made his will, would probably have been mentioned in it. It is possible that the son was illegitimate, as some have supposed. But it is also possible that the "adolescens" in the register is a slip of the scribe who made the entry from the sexton's notes; for, as Halliwell Phillipps tells us, the entries in the book were made from such notes, and "their accuracy officially therein certified, at frequent but unsettled intervals," the record being therefore "a copy or an abridgment of a note made at the time of the ceremony." It seems to me more probable that an error in a single word of an entry thus made at second hand may have occurred, than that several entries of marriage, birth, and death which we might expect to find in the register should have been omitted. I am therefore

inclined to believe that it was the poet's brother Gilbert, not a hypothetical nephew, who was buried in February, 1612.

In February of the next year, Richard, probably the last surviving brother of the poet, also died, in the thirty-ninth year of his age. He was baptized on the 11th of March, 1574. His burial, according to the register, was on the 4th of February, 1613. Joan (baptized April 15th, 1569) was the only child of John and Mary Shakespeare, except William, who was now left. She married William Hart and survived her famous brother thirty years, dying in 1646. She had three sons, who lived to be remembered in the poet's will, and a daughter, who died in 1607, when four years old.

In March, 1613, Shakespeare bought a house in London, the lower part of which was occupied as a haberdasher's shop. The property was very near the Blackfriars theatre, and the price was £140, of which £60 remained on mortgage. For some reason Shakespeare must have particularly wished to get possession of it, for the former owner, Henry Walker, a London musician, had paid only £100 in 1604, and it is improbable that it had materially increased in value since that time. Shakespeare soon leased the house to John Robinson, who was one of the persons that had violently opposed the establishment of the neighbouring theatre.

In June, 1613, a malicious bit of gossip was circulating in Stratford with reference to Mrs. Hall,

Shakespeare's daughter, and one Ralph Smith. The rumour was traced to a person named Lane, who was accordingly summoned to the Ecclesiastical Court to answer for it. The case was opened in Worcester on the 15th of July, 1613, Robert Whatcot, a friend of the poet, being the chief witness on behalf of the plaintiff. Neither Lane nor his attorney ventured to appear in court, and in the end the lady's character was vindicated by the excommunication of Lane on the 27th of July.

The precise date of Shakespeare's return to Stratford to take up his residence at New Place is unknown; but it was probably as early as September, 1611, when his name appears in a list of subscribers (including the leading inhabitants of the town) to a fund raised "towards the charge of prosecuting the bill in parliament for the better repair of the highways."

The Globe theatre in London was destroyed by fire on the 29th of June, 1613 (page 448 above). Shakespeare was probably in Stratford at the time, as he had already taken up his residence there, and his name is not mentioned in any of the notices of the catastrophe. Some of the actors had a narrow escape from death in the conflagration. The theatre was rebuilt the next year.

In the spring of 1614, when Shakespeare was residing at Stratford (though he may have been on a visit to London at that particular time) a Puritan preacher, who had been invited to the town by

the corporation, was hospitably entertained at New Place. An item in the town records reads: "For one quart of sack and one quart of clarett wine geven to a preacher at the New Place, *xxd.*" Dr. Hall, who was a Puritan, may have been living with Shakespeare at that time, and the preacher may have been invited to the house through his influence. If Shakespeare was at home, no doubt he found the bibulous Puritan an interesting study.

On the 9th of July, 1614, a fire at Stratford destroyed no less than fifty-four houses, besides barns, stables, and other buildings. Fortunately the Shakespeare birthplace in Henley Street and the poet's residence at New Place escaped the conflagration.

In the summer of 1614, John Combe of Welcombe died, leaving £5 to Shakespeare in his will. This proves sufficiently that he had no ill feeling towards the poet on account of the mock epitaph which the latter is said to have written upon him. Rowe tells the story thus: "It happened that in a pleasant conversation amongst their common friends, Mr. Combe told Shakspeare in a laughing manner that he intended to write his epitaph, if he happened to outlive him; and since he could not know what might be said of him when he was dead, he desired it might be done immediately; upon which Shakspeare gave him these four lines: —

“Ten in the hundred lies here ingrav'd;  
'Tis hundred to ten his soul is not sav'd:

If any man ask, who lies in this tomb?  
Oh! ho! quoth the Devil, 'tis my John-a-Combe.'"

Rowe adds that Combe "never forgave it;" but it is more probable, from the biographer's own version of the story, that the squire took the epitaph in the "laughing manner" in which it was written.

According to Aubrey, the epitaph was not written until after Combe's death; but it is highly improbable that the poet would thus satirize his old friend after his death — and, least of all, before the funeral. Both versions are very likely false. Moreover, there is no reason for believing that Combe was usurious; and ten per cent was the legal and ordinary rate of interest until after Shakespeare's death.

In the autumn of 1614 the good people of Stratford were greatly excited by the attempt of William Combe, the squire of Welcombe, to enclose a large portion of the common fields near the town. The design was resisted by the corporation, on the ground that it would be an injury to the agricultural interests of the town, and would seriously diminish the tithes. Combe nevertheless spared no efforts to accomplish his object, coercing the poor and coaxing the rich to favour it. It seems probable that Shakespeare was finally induced by Combe's agent to join that party, being assured that his personal interests should suffer no detriment. It is certain that he did not oppose the enclosures, for on the 23d of

December the corporation addressed a letter of remonstrance to him on the subject, and another on the same day to Mr. Manwaring, who was personally interested in the success of the scheme, and was acting in unison with Combe to promote it.

Shakespeare was in London when the letter of the corporation was addressed to him, having gone thither on the 16th of November. It is unlikely that, in those days of tedious and difficult travel, he returned to Stratford in the interval. We are indebted for our knowledge of some of the details of the business to the diary of Thomas Greene, the town-clerk of Stratford, in which the following entries occur:—

“Jovis [Thursday], 17 No: my Cosen Shakspeare comyng yesterday to towne, I went to see him howe he did. He told me that they assured him they ment to inclose noe further then to Gospell Bushe, and soe upp straight (leavyng out part of the Dyngles to the field) to the gate in Clopton hedge, and take in Salisburys peece: and that they meane in Aprill to servey the Land, and then to gyve satisfaccion, and not before; and he and Mr. Hall say they think ther will be nothyng done at all.

“23 Dec. A hall. Lettres wryten — one to Mr. Manweryng, another to Mr. Shakspeare, with almost all the Companyes handes to eyther: I alsoe wrytte of myself to my Cosen Shakspear the Coppyes of all our [actes], then alsoe a not of the Inconvenyences wold grow by the Inclosure.

“9 Ja: [1615.] Mr. Replyngham, 28 Octobris, articulated



with Mr. Shakspeare, and then I was putt in by T. Lucas.

“On Wednesday being the xjth day [Jan. 1615] . . . Mr. Manyryng and his agreement for me with my Cosen Shakspeare.

<p>“14 Aug. [1615] Mr. Barker dyed.</p>	}	<p>Se p. W. Shakspeare tellyng J. Greene that I was not able to beare the encloseyng of Welcombe.”</p>
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Greene was in London at the date of the first entry, and in Stratford at that of the second. Why the last observation should have been chronicled at all is a mystery; but the note has a mournful interest as giving us the latest recorded spoken words of the dramatist.

Concerning this entry Halliwell-Phillipps remarks: “There is a singular obscurity which renders a correct interpretation of Greene’s handwriting a matter of unusual difficulty. The pronoun in this entry is considered by Mr. Edward Scott of the British Museum, a very able judge, to be really the letter *J*, while Dr. Ingleby is of opinion that Greene, who was unquestionably a careless scribbler, intended to write *he*. But if Shakespeare had not favoured the enclosure scheme, why should the majority of the corporation have addressed one of their letters of remonstrance to him as well as to Manwaring, or why should Greene have troubled the former with ‘a note of the inconveniences’ that

would arise from the execution of the proposed design?" Moreover, the articles of agreement between Shakespeare and Replingham are extant, securing the former against loss by the enclosures, in order to induce him to favour the scheme.

Dr. Ingleby, in his monograph on the subject of the enclosures (1885), in which he prints all the documentary evidence in the case, takes the ground (as stated above) that, though the *I* or *J*, in the expression "I was not able" in Greene's diary, is really *I* and not *he*, it was nevertheless a slip of the pen and meant for *he*. He admits that "this supposition would be strained unless we knew that Greene makes this substitution in other passages; and that is so." He cites several instances of this error in the diary, corrected by the writer. His summary of the matter is as follows: "The proposed enclosure would have involved three radical changes: (1) conversion of tillage into pasturage; (2) alteration of boundaries; (3) change of tenure and ownership. The first would have materially affected the value of the lease of the tithes, one moiety of which belonged to Shakespeare, and the other wholly or partially to Thomas Greene. Accordingly we may be sure that unless they received ample compensation in land or money they would have been opposed to the scheme. The large stake they had in it, and the probability that William Combe would, in his own interests, endeavour to purchase Shakespeare's co-operation, even at a very

high figure, fully account for the extraordinary efforts of the corporation to secure his opposition to the enclosure. Shakespeare, like Greene, seems to have temporized with both parties, when he might have treated with both, like an elector selling his vote to the highest bidder. That he abstained from assisting the scheme is, I think, a fair inference from the item on the last page of the original" — that is, the entry in the diary which contains the disputed "I was not able." Dr. Ingleby objects to regarding *I* as what Thomas Greene *meant* to write, and therefore as referring to himself, because it implies that Shakespeare told J. Greene "a fact about Thomas, which, if true, must have been already known to him; and that Thomas Greene reverted to this as of sufficient importance to be recorded in the diary long after it had been posted up." This, as Dr. Ingleby adds, "is in the highest degree improbable." He therefore has no doubt whatever that "Shakespeare told J. Greene that he was not able to co-operate with William Combe and Manwaring in the proposed enclosure, and meant to imply that he preferred his moiety of the tithes to the compensation offered him. At the same time he must have known that the scheme was to the last degree unpopular with the inhabitants, who viewed it as likely to inflict on them even greater loss than the late fires, and were ready, if necessary, to oppose the enclosure *vi et armis*. No wonder, then, that Shakespeare shrank from helping on a

movement of so great danger to the peace of Stratford and its surrounding districts. Anyhow, I feel confident that the words here imputed to him ought not to be understood as an expression of opinion on the subject of enclosures."

It should be understood that this entry was made at some unknown time (though Dr. Ingleby says "five months") after the one beside which it is put. It was apparently inserted in that blank space in the diary because the writer had been told that the conversation occurred in September — of 1614, not of 1615.

The attempted enclosure was not accomplished. On the 27th of March, 1615, an order prohibiting it was issued by Chief Justice Coke at the Warwick Assises. A portion of the disputed land, called in Greene's diary as now "the Dingles," is still unenclosed, and is one of the best points for getting a good view of Stratford and its neighbourhood.

On Saturday, the 10th of February, 1616, Judith, the poet's younger daughter, who has been so charmingly idealized in Mr. Black's novel bearing her name, was married to Thomas Quiney, who was nearly four years her junior, having been baptized on the 26th of February, 1589. He was the son of Richard Quiney, whose correspondence with the poet in 1598 has been already noticed (page 300 above). At the time of his marriage Thomas lived in a small house on the west side of the High Street, of which he had taken a twenty-one years'

lease from the corporation in December, 1611. "The front of this house, which is near the corner of Wood Street, has been modernized, but much of the interior, with its massive beams, oaken floors, and square joists, remains structurally as it must have been in the days of Thomas Quiney." In the summer of 1616, he obtained the lease of a house, called the Cage (probably at one time a prison), from his brother-in-law, William Chandler, who gave it to him in exchange for his interests in the house on the other side of the way. He appears to have inhabited the Cage from the time it came into his hands until he removed from it shortly before November, 1652, when the lease was assigned to his brother Richard of London, the premises being then described as "lately in the tenure of Thomas Quiney." The house has long been modernized, the only existing portions of the ancient building being a few massive beams supporting the floor above the cellar.

Nothing is known concerning the career of young Quiney previous to 1611, but that he was an accomplished penman and acquainted with French may be inferred from the motto in that language and the elaborately flourished signatures with which he adorned an account delivered to the corporation in 1623. At the time of his marriage or soon afterwards he was in business as a vintner at the Cage, and was patronized by the corporation and the leading inhabitants. In 1617 he was elected a Burgess,

and in 1621-1623 he acted as chamberlain. In 1630 he retired from the council, and at the same time was involved in litigation, and making an attempt to dispose of the lease of his house. On the 21st of September, 1630, he was fined for swearing and for encouraging tipplers in his shop. His business fell off, and about 1652 he abandoned it, and removed to London, where he seems to have died a few years later. His brother Richard, who was a wealthy grocer, appears to have assisted him after he left Stratford.

Thomas and Judith Quiney had three children, whose baptisms are recorded in the parish register at Stratford thus:—

“Nov. 23, 1616. Shakspere filius Thomas Quyny gent.”

“Feb. 9, 1617-8. Richard filius Thomas Quinee.”

“Jan. 23, 1619-20. Thomas, fili. to Thomas Queeney.”

The eldest child died a few months after his birth, his burial being thus recorded:—

“May 8, 1617. Shakspere fillius Tho. Quyny, gent.”

In the Chamberlain's Accounts, for the year 1617, it is stated that the sum of 4*d.* was paid for having the great bell rung “at the death of Thomas Quynis child.”

The second son barely attained to the age of twenty, and the youngest was only eighteen at his death; but these brothers died within a month of

each other, probably through some sickness prevailing in the town. Their burials are thus recorded:—

“1638. Jan. 28. Thomas filius Thomæ Quiney.”

“1638. Feb. 26. Richardus filius Tho. Quiney.”

Judith Quiney lived to the age of 76 years, a term much exceeding that attained, with the exception of her aunt Joan Hart, by other members of the family. Her burial is thus recorded: “1661. Febu. 9. Judith uxor Thomas Quiney, Gent.”

There was some reason for hastening the marriage of Judith Shakespeare, for it took place without a license; an irregularity for which the couple were fined and threatened with excommunication by the ecclesiastical court at Worcester a few weeks afterwards. It has been suggested that the failing health of the poet may explain the hurried nuptials, as no other cause is known or suspected. We know that his will was prepared in the latter part of January, 1616, under the direction of Francis Collins, a solicitor then residing at Warwick.

It appears, from the original date in the superscription, and from some of the other erasures in the manuscript, that it was a corrected draft ready for the engrossed copy that was to be signed by the testator on Thursday, the 25th of January; but, for some unknown reason, the appointment with the solicitor was postponed, at Shakespeare's request, and before Collins had ordered a fair copy to be made. The draft therefore remained in his custody

until the poet's condition became suddenly more serious, or the fever which is said to have caused his death supervened, when the lawyer was hurriedly summoned from Warwick. It was deemed unadvisable to wait for the preparation of a regular transcript of the will, and the document was signed after a few more alterations had been hastily made.

The most peculiar interlineation in the will, and the one which has been the subject of the greatest discussion with reference to its probable bearing on the question whether the poet was happy in his domestic relations, is that in which he leaves his widow his "second-best bed with the furniture." Halliwell-Phillipps remarks: "The first-best bed was that generally reserved for visitors, and one which may possibly have descended as a family heirloom, becoming in that way the undevisable property of his eldest daughter. Bedsteads were sometimes of elaborate workmanship, and gifts of them are often to be met with in ancient wills. The notion of indifference to his wife, so frequently deduced from the above-mentioned entry, cannot be sustained on that account. So far from being considered of trifling import, beds were even sometimes selected as portions of compensation for dower; and bequests of personal articles of the most insignificant description were never formerly held in any light but that of marks of affection. Among the smaller legacies of former days may be enumerated kettles, chairs,



gowns, hats, pewter cups, feather bolsters, and culenders. In the year 1642 one John Shakespeare of Budbrook, near Warwick, considered it a sufficient mark of respect to his father-in-law to leave him 'his best boots.'"

It may be added that Coke, in his *Commentary on Littleton* (edition of 1629), says: "And note that in some places, chattels as heirloomes, as the *best bed*, table, pot, pan, cart, and other dead chattels moveable, may go to the heire, and the heire in that case may have an action for them at the common law."

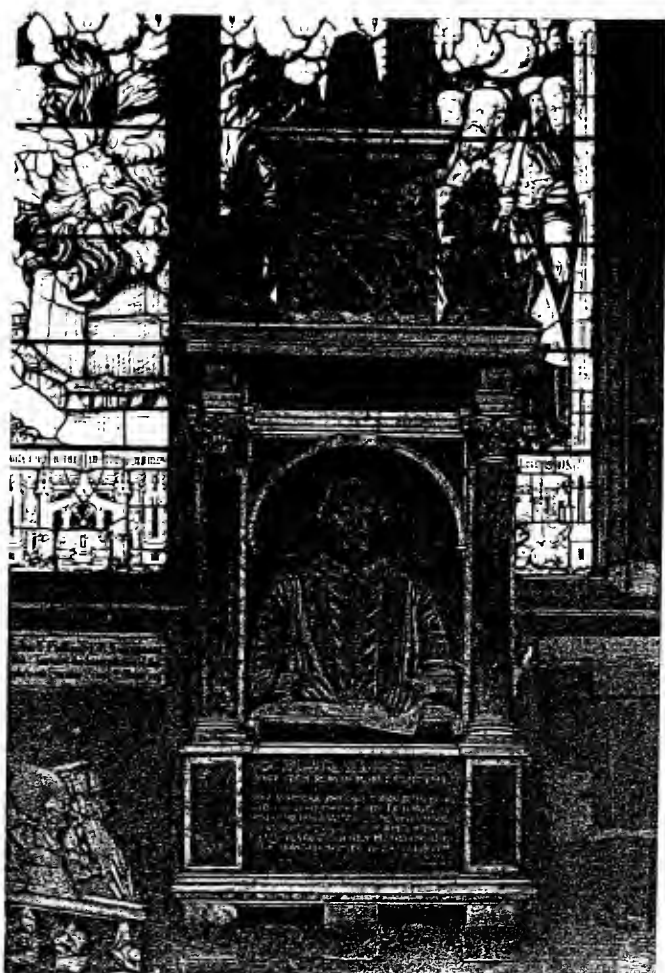
As to the omission of any other reference to the widow in Shakespeare's will than the interlined bequest of the "second-best bed," it is sufficient to say that she was amply provided for by virtue of her rights of dower, and that it was by no means uncommon to omit all reference to the widow in wills of the time when she was thus provided for. The gift of the bed was doubtless a mark of personal regard, and not the deliberate insult it would otherwise have been—an insult we cannot imagine William Shakespeare as inflicting on the mother of his children.

On the 17th of April, 1616, William Hart, who had married Joan Shakespeare, and who was carrying on the business of a hatter at the birthplace in Henley Street, was buried at Stratford.

Shakespeare himself died the very next week—on Tuesday, April 23d. According to the Rev. John Ward (see page 12 above), in the latter part of

March the poet was visited by his friends, Drayton and Ben Jonson; and at a "merry meeting" of the three at a Stratford tavern, they "drank too hard, for Shakespear died of a feavour there contracted." But the story probably had no other foundation than the popular notion of the time that fevers were generally due to some excess in eating or drinking. It is more likely, as Halliwell-Phillipps suggests, that the disease in Shakespeare's case was induced by the wretched sanitary conditions of the immediate neighbourhood of New Place — an explanation that would not have occurred even to the medical men of that day. Chapel Lane, which bounded one side of the estate, was one of the filthiest thoroughfares of the town. A streamlet ran through it, the water of which turned a mill, alluded to in the local records of that period. This watercourse gradually became "a shallow fetid ditch, an open receptacle of sewage and filth." It continued to be a nuisance for at least two centuries more. A letter written in 1807, in connection with a lawsuit, describes it as "very obnoxious at times," being "always full of mud." In 1774 it was said to be "a wide dirty ditch choked with mud, and all the filth of that part of the town ran into it." Middens, piggeries, and other nuisances abounded in the lower part of the lane and in the rear of Shakespeare's garden. .

The funeral of "Will. Shakspere, gent.," according to the parish register, occurred on the 25th of



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April. His remains were deposited in the chancel of the church, that being the legal and customary place for the interment of the owners of the tithes.

The grave is near the northern wall of the chancel, covered with a slab bearing this inscription:—

GOOD FREEND, FOR IESVS SAKE FORBEARE  
TO DIGG THE DVST ENCLOSED HEARE;  
BLESTE BE THE MAN THAT SPARES THES STONES,  
AND CVRST BE HE THAT MOVES MY BONES.

According to a tradition, dating to the latter part of the seventeenth century, the lines were selected, and "ordered to be cut" on the gravestone, by Shakespeare; but the parish-clerk told Dowdall in 1693 that they were made by the poet himself, "a little before his death." Neither Dugdale in 1656, nor Rowe in 1709, ascribes them to him, and it is hardly possible that they were his composition. If he desired that the verses, or something like them, should be put on the stone, it was doubtless from an aversion to having his bones removed at some future time to the ancient charnel-house which adjoined the chancel wall near his grave. A visitor to Stratford in 1777 referred to this as follows: "At the side of the chancel is a charnel-house almost filled with human bones, skulls, etc.—the guide said that Shakespeare was so much affected by this charnel-house that he wrote the epitaph for himself to prevent his bones being thrown into it."

Dr. John Hall was in London in June, 1617, and on the 22d of the month proved Shakespeare's will at the Archbishop of Canterbury's registry. He also presented an inventory of the poet's household effects, but the document has been lost or destroyed.

The monument to Shakespeare in the parish church was erected at some time previous to 1623, when it was mentioned in the verses by Leonard Digges, prefixed to the folio published in that year: —

“ Shake-speare, at length thy pious fellows give  
The world thy Workes: thy Workes, by which, out-live  
Thy Tombe, thy name must: when that stone is rent,  
And Time dissolves thy Stratford Monument,  
Here we alive shall view thee still.”

The monument was placed on the north wall of the chancel, and consists of an ornamental niche enclosing a life-sized bust, which tradition says was copied from a posthumous cast of the poet's face. The sculptor was Gerard Johnson, the son of a native of Amsterdam who had settled in England as a “tombe-maker” in the reign of Elizabeth. The bust was originally painted, the eyes being light hazel and the hair and beard auburn. The doublet was scarlet, the gown black, the collar and wristbands white. In 1749 the monument was repaired and repainted; but in 1793, at Malone's instigation, the bust was covered with a coat of white paint, which remained until 1861, when the original col-

ouring was carefully restored. The following hit at Malone's iconoclastic proceeding is found in the Visitors' Book at Stratford: —

“Stranger, to whom this monument is shown,  
 Invoke the poet's curses on Malone,  
 Whose meddling zeal his barbarous taste betrays,  
 And daubs his tombstone as he marr'd his plays.”

The bust has no merit as a work of art, but as a portrait of the poet we must suppose that it was considered tolerable enough to be accepted by his surviving relatives.

The following lines are engraved on a tablet beneath the bust: —

IVDICIO PYLIVM, GENIO SOCRATEM, ARTE MARONEM,  
 TERRA TEGIT, POPVLVS MÆRET, OLYMPVS HABET.

STAY PASSENGER, WHY GOEST THOV BY SO FAST,  
 READ IF THOV CANST, WHOM ENVIQVS DEATH HATH  
 PLAST

WITHIN THIS MONVMENT SHAKSPEARE. WITH WHOME  
 QVICK NATVRE DIDE: WHOSE NAME DOTH DECK Y<sup>S</sup>  
 TOMBE

FAR MORE THEN COST: SITH ALL Y<sup>T</sup> HE HATH WRITT  
 LEAVES LIVING ART, BVT PAGE, TO SERVE HIS WITT.

OBIIT AÑO DOI 1616

ÆTATIS 53 DIE 23 AP.

That the verses could not have been written by a resident of Stratford, or by any one who knew

where they were to be placed, is proved by the words, "within this monument." They were probably written by some friend in London, where the monument was made. The entire expense of the memorial is said to have been defrayed by Mrs. Hall.

Shakespeare's widow survived him for more than seven years. The record of her burial is thus given in the parish-register, under the date of August, 1623:—

"8. { Mrs. Shakespeare.  
      { Anna Uxor Richardi James."

This bracketed entry has led a few commentators to suspect that she was re-married to Richard James. "This conjecture is altogether at variance with the terms of her monumental inscription, and brackets of a like description are to be seen in other parts of the register, no fewer than six occurring in the list of baptisms for the year in question, 1623. The matter, however, is placed beyond all doubt by the record of the two funerals as it thus appears in a contemporary transcript of the original notes that were made on the occasion:—

'August 8. Mrs. Ann Shakespeare.

8. Ann, wyfe to Richard James.

and in an enumeration of 'persons remarkable,' whose names were to be noticed in the Stratford register, which was added to the volume towards



the close of the seventeenth century, there is included the memorandum, '1623, one Mrs. Shakespere was buried'" (Halliwell-Phillipps).

Tradition says that she earnestly desired to be laid in the same grave with her husband. Her tombstone is beside his, and bears the following inscription: —

“ Here lyeth interred the Body of Anne, wife of William Shakespeare, who depected this Life the 6th Day of Augu: 1623, being of the age of 67 yeares.

Ubera tu mater, tu lac, vitamque dedisti:  
 Væ mihi, pro tanto munere, saxa dabo.  
 Quam malle, amoveat lapidem bonus angelus ore,  
 Exeat, ut Christi corpus, imago tua;  
 Sed nil vota valent; venias, cito, Christe, resurget,  
 Clausa licet tumulo, mater et astra petet.”

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE POET'S FAMILY AFTER HIS DEATH

THE Halls, who were the executors and the chief legatees of Shakespeare's will, made New Place their residence soon after his death. In the Vestry notes of October, 1617, Dr. Hall is mentioned as living in the Chapel Street Ward; and in a town record dated February 3d, 1617-18, he is alluded to as "Mr. Hall at Newplace." He gained a high reputation as a practitioner, his advice being sought far and wide. He was summoned several times to attend the Earl and Countess of Northampton at Ludlow Castle, more than forty miles off — no trifling journey in those days. We learn a good deal about his medical practice from a book concerning it, published in London in 1657, and entitled, "Select Observations on English Bodies, or Cures both Empericall and Historicall performed upon very eminent Persons in desperate Diseases, first written in Latine by Mr. John Hall, physician, living at Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire, where he was very famous, as also in the counties adjacent, as appears by these Observations drawn out of sev-

erall hundreds of his as choysest; now put into English for common benefit by James Cooke, practitioner in Physick and Chirurgery." A second edition appeared in 1679, re-issued in 1683 with merely a new title-page. In the original small octavo manuscript used by Cooke much of the Latin is obscurely abbreviated, and some of the translations appear to be paraphrased. The cases were selected from a large number of previous notes, and being mostly undated, without a chronological arrangement, it is impossible to be certain that some of them are not to be referred to the time of the poet. The earliest one to which a date can be assigned seems to be that of Lord Compton, who was attended by Hall previously to his lordship's departure with the King for Scotland in March, 1617. Hall was evidently held in much esteem by the Northampton family, whom he attended at Compton Wynnyates as well as at Ludlow. Dr. John Bird, in his *Prolesions* (1657), says of him: "The learned author lived in our own times, and in the county of Warwick, where he practised many years, and in great fame for his skill, far and near. Those who seemed highly to esteem him, and whom, by God's blessing, he wrought those cures upon, you shall find to be, among others, persons noble, rich, and learned. And this I take to be a great sign of his ability, that such who spare not for cost, and they who have more than ordinary understanding, nay such as hated him for his relig-

ion, often made use of him." He was an earnest Puritan, and interested himself in all that related to the services of the parish church, to which he presented a costly new pulpit. He was exceedingly intimate with the Rev. Thomas Wilson, the vicar, "a thorough-going Puritan, who was accused of holding conventicles, and of having so little ecclesiastical feeling that he allowed his swine and poultry to desecrate the interior of the Guild Chapel." They were such great friends that the vicarial courts were sometimes held at New Place. Of Hall's religious sincerity we may form an opinion from a memorandum written after his recovery from a serious illness in 1632: "Thou, O Lord, which hast the power of life and death, and drawest from the gates of death, I confesse without any art or counsell of man, but only from thy goodnesse and clemency, thou hast saved me from the bitter and deadly symptomes of a deadly fever, beyond the expectation of all about me, restoring me, as it were, from the very jaws of death to former health, for which I praise Thy name, O most Mercifull God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying thee to give me a most thankfull heart for this great favour, for which I have cause to admire thee."

He died on the 25th of November, 1635, the "ringing of the great bell" attending his obsequies in the chancel of the parish church on the following day. Favour was shown in the permission to bury him there, his share of the tithe-lease having been dis-

posed of in 1624. The concession was perhaps due to the influence of his son-in-law, Thomas Nash, who was one of the tithe-owners.

The will of Dr. Hall is short and quaint, as quoted by Malone: "The last Will and Testament nuncupative of John Hall of Stratford-upon-Avon, in the county of Warwick, Gent., made and delivered the five and twentieth of November, 1635, *Imprimis*, I give unto my daughter Nash my house in Acton. *Item*, I give unto my daughter Nash my meadow. *Item*, I give my goods and money unto my wife and my daughter Nash to be equally divided betwixt them. *Item*, concerning my study of books, I leave them, said he, to you, my son Nash, to dispose of them as you see good. As for my manuscripts, I would have given them to Mr. Boles if he had been here, but forasmuch as he is not here present, you may, son Nash, burn them, or do with them what you please."

The "books" may have included any that the poet had at New Place, but we have no reason to suppose that there were many of these.

The inscription on Hall's tombstone is as follows:—

"Heere lyeth the body of John Hall, Gent.: Hee marr: Svsanna the daughter and coheire of Will: Shakespeare, Gent. Hee deceased Nove<sup>r</sup> 25, A<sup>o</sup> 1635, aged 60.

Hallius hic situs est, medica celeberrimus arte;  
Expectans regni gaudia læta Dei;

Dignus erat meritis, qui Nestora vinceret annis ;

In terris omnes sed rapit æqua dies ;

Ne tumulto quid desit, adest fidissima coniux,

Et vitæ comitem nunc quoque mortis habet."

Of Susanna Hall we get one interesting personal glimpse after her husband's death. About the year 1642, a surgeon named James Cooke (see page 481 above), attending in his professional capacity on a detachment of soldiers stationed at Stratford, was invited to New Place to examine the books which the doctor had left behind him. "After a view of them," he observes, "Mrs. Hall told me she had some books left by one that professed physic with her husband for some money;—I told her, if I liked them, I would give her the money again;—she brought them forth, amongst which there was this [the medical case-book], with another of the author's, both intended for the press;—I, being acquainted with Mr. Hall's hand, told her that one or two of them were her husband's, and showed them her;—she denied; I affirmed, till I perceived she began to be offended;—at last I returned her the money." As we have seen, he afterwards translated and published the book. It is curious that she should not have been sufficiently acquainted with Hall's hand-writing to know that the manuscript was his. She herself was able to write, at least to the extent of affixing her signature to a legal document.

Mrs. Hall died on the 11th of July, 1649, and her

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grave is beside that of her husband in the chancel, inscribed thus:—

“Heere lyeth the body of Susanna wife to John Hall, gent: the daughter of William Shakespeare, gent: shee deceased the 11th of Iuly, A<sup>o</sup> 1649, aged 66.

Witty above her sexe, but that's not all,  
Wise to salvation was good Mistris Hall;  
Something of Shakespere was in that, but this  
Wholy of him with whom she's now in blisse.  
Then, Passenger, ha'st ne're a teare  
To weepe with her that wept with all,  
That wept, yet set her selfe to chere  
Them up with comforts cordiall.  
Her love shall live, her mercy spread,  
When thou ha'st nere a teare to shed.”

The inscription was erased about the year 1707, giving place to the memorial of a person named Watts; but having been preserved by Dugdale, it was restored in 1836.

Elizabeth Hall (baptized February 21st, 1608) was twice married. Her first husband, Thomas Nash (to whom she was married April 22, 1626), was a respectable inhabitant of Stratford, and had been a student of Lincoln's Inn, London. He was the eldest son of Anthony Nash of Welcombe, to whom the poet in his will gave 26s. 8d., and the same sum to his brother, John Nash, to “buy them ringes.” Thomas Nash was fourteen years older than his wife, having been baptised at Stratford, June 20th,

1593. They had no children. He died April 4th, 1647, and was buried in the chancel of the parish church. Two years later (June 5th, 1649) his widow married John Barnard (or Bernard), Esquire, of Abington Manor, near Northampton. The marriage took place at Billesley, about three miles from Stratford. No children were born to them; and Lady Barnard (her husband having been knighted by Charles II., November 25th, 1661) died and was buried at Abington, February 17th, 1669. No monument of any kind records the memory of this last descendant of the poet.

In the month of July, 1643, when Mrs. Hall was in possession of New Place, Queen Henrietta Maria was entertained there in the course of her triumphant march from Newark to Keinton. This fact, which there is no reason to dispute, rests upon a tradition told by Sir Hugh Clopton to Theobald, according to whom the Queen "kept her Court for three weeks in New Place." She was, however, at Stratford only three days, arriving there on July 11th with upwards of two thousand foot and a thousand horse, about a hundred wagons and a train of artillery.

In April, 1647, at the very time of her husband's death, Mrs. Nash had soldiers quartered upon her at New Place, one of whom was implicated in deer-poaching from the park of Sir Greville Verney, which occurred on the 30th of April.

Thomas Nash was buried in the chancel of the



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church at Stratford, with the Shakespeares, and his gravestone bears this inscription: —

“Heere resteth the body of Thomas Nashe, esq. He mar. Elizabeth, the daug: and heire of Iohn Halle, gent. He died Aprill 4, A. 1647, aged 53.

*Fata manent omnes, hunc non virtute carentem,  
Vt neque divitiis, abstulit atra dies,  
Abstulit, at referet lux ultima; siste, viator,  
Si peritura paras per male parta peris.”*

How long his widow continued to reside at New Place after her marriage to John Barnard we do not know; but the mansion is mentioned as in his tenure in 1652. His usual place of residence during the latter years of their lives was at Abington, where they both died.

Lady Barnard made her will at Abington, in which she directs that after the death of her husband New Place shall be sold to the best bidder, the first offer of it being made to Edward Nash. As he did not purchase it, it was sold to Sir Edward Walker, who had been Secretary of War to Charles I. and afterwards Garter King at Arms. On his death in 1677 he devised it to his daughter Barbara, wife of Sir John Clopton, for her life, after which it was to go to his eldest grandson, Edward Clopton. Barbara died in 1692, when the estate came into the possession of Edward Clopton. In November, 1698, he transferred it to his father, Sir

John Clopton, who soon afterward demolished the original mansion and built a new one on a somewhat different plan. This house, when finished in 1703, was occupied by Hugh Clopton, another son of Sir John. He died in 1751, and New Place was then bought by the Rev. Francis Gastrell, who pulled down the house in 1759, on account of a quarrel he had had with the corporation about poor rates.

There is a well-authenticated tradition that Shakespeare had planted with his own hands in the garden of New Place the first mulberry-tree that had ever been brought to Stratford. This was probably in the spring of 1609, when a Frenchman named Ver-ton distributed a large number of young mulberry-trees in the midland counties. He did this by the order of James I., who encouraged the cultivation of the tree, in the hope that silk might become a staple product of the country.

Gastrell cut the mulberry-tree down in 1758, to the great indignation of Stratford folk. The late R. B. Wheler was told by his father that, when a boy, he assisted in breaking the clergyman's windows in revenge for the destruction of the tree. Tradition says that he cut it down because he was annoyed by the number of travellers who came to see it; but Halliwell-Phillipps suggests that he may have had a better reason for the act. "Several accounts agree in stating that it had attained a great magnitude with overhanging boughs, the

trunk being in a state of decay, and indeed it is most probable that a tree of a century and a half's growth would have been of a very considerable size, the mould of Stratford being peculiarly favourable to the luxuriant growth of the mulberry. If planted at all near the house, its boughs would certainly have overshadowed some of the rooms at the back. Davies, in his *Life of Garrick*, the first edition of which appeared in 1780, expressly asserts that 'the mulberry-tree planted by the poet's own hand became an object of dislike to this tasteless owner of it because it overshadowed his window, and rendered the house, as he thought, subject to damps and moisture.' Here is one plausible reason given for the removal, and the evidences of decay may have been another. It would seem, at all events, that he was not indifferent to the poetical association, for that he kept relics of it in his own hands may be inferred from his widow's having presented one to the Lichfield Museum. In a catalogue of that museum (1786) is the following entry: 'An horizontal section of the stock of the mulberry-tree planted by Shakespear at Stratford-upon-Avon; this curiosity was presented to the museum by Mrs. Gastrel, August 19th, 1778.'"

The large mulberry-tree now standing in the grounds of New Place is said to be a lineal descendant of the one planted by Shakespeare.

It is absolutely certain that Lady Barnard was the last surviving descendant of the poet, though at

one time and another persons have claimed to be directly descended from him. His sister Joan, who married William Hart (see page 460 above) had four children, only one of whom, Thomas Hart, married and had offspring, and their descendants have been traced by French (*Genealogica Shakespeareana*) down to the present time. None of the other children of John Shakespeare are certainly known to have had issue; and Gilbert (see page 458 above) is the only one who has been suspected of having any.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE EARLY QUARTOS. — Before the publication of the folio of 1623 seventeen of Shakespeare's plays had appeared in quarto form at various times: *Richard II.*, *Richard III.*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, 1 *Henry IV.*, 2 *Henry IV.*, *Henry V.*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Titus Andronicus*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Pericles*, and *Othello*; also *Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece*, *The Sonnets* (with *A Lover's Complaint*), and *The Passionate Pilgrim*, a small portion of which was Shakespeare's. Of these none but the *Venus and Adonis* and the *Lucrece* were published by the author or with his consent, all the others being piratical ventures. The chronology of the quartos during the poet's life, or to the year 1616, is as follows: —

*Venus and Adonis* was the earliest published work of Shakespeare's, the first edition having appeared in 1593.

In 1594, *Titus Andronicus* (according to Langbaine), *Lucrece*, and the second edition of *Venus and Adonis* were published.

In 1596, the third edition of *Venus and Adonis*.

In 1597, the first editions of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Richard II.*, and *Richard III.*

In 1598, the second editions of *Lucrece*, *Richard II.*, and *Richard III.*, and the first of *Love's Labour's Lost* and 1 *Henry IV.*

In 1599, the fourth edition of *Venus and Adonis*, the second of *Romeo and Juliet* and 1 *Henry IV.*, and the first of *The Passionate Pilgrim*.

In 1600, the fifth edition of *Venus and Adonis*; the third of *Lucrece*; the first and second of 2 *Henry IV.*, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, and *The Merchant of Venice*; the second of *Titus Andronicus* and *The Passionate Pilgrim*; and the first of *Henry V.* and *Much Ado About Nothing*.

In 1601, *The Phoenix and the Turtle* appeared in Chester's *Love's Martyr*.

In 1602, the sixth and seventh editions of *Venus and Adonis*, the third of *Richard III.*, the second of *Henry V.*, and the first of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

In 1603, the first edition of *Hamlet*.

In 1604, the third of 1 *Henry IV.* and the second of *Hamlet*.

In 1605, the fourth of *Richard III.* and the third of *Hamlet*.

In 1607, the fourth edition of *Lucrece*.

In 1608, the fourth edition of 1 *Henry IV.*, the third of *Richard II.* and *Henry V.*, and the first and second of *King Lear*.

In 1609, the third and fourth editions of *Romeo and Juliet* (undated, but probably belonging to this year); the first and second of *Troilus and Cressida* and *Pericles*; and the first of the *Sonnets* (including *A Lover's Complaint*).

In 1611, the fourth edition of *Hamlet*, and the third of *Titus Andronicus* and *Pericles*.

In 1612, the fifth edition of *Richard III.* and the third of *The Passionate Pilgrim*.

In 1613, the fifth edition of *1 Henry IV.*

In 1615, the fourth edition of *Richard II.*

In 1616, the fifth edition of *Lucrece*.

After the death of Shakespeare the following quartos were published before the folio appeared:—

In 1617, the eighth edition of *Venus and Adonis*.

In 1619, the fourth edition of *Pericles* and the second of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

In 1620, the ninth edition of *Venus and Adonis*.

In 1622, the sixth edition of *Richard III.* and *1 Henry IV.* and the first of *Othello*.

THE FOUR FOLIOS.—The folio of 1623 was nominally edited by John Heming and Henry Condell, two of Shakespeare's friends and fellow-actors, and was brought out by a syndicate of five publishers and printers, William and Isaac Jaggard, William Aspley, John Smethwick, and Edward Blount. The Jaggards were printers, the others publishers or booksellers. William Jaggard had printed *The Passionate Pilgrim* in 1599.

The folio is a volume of 906 pages, including the page facing the title and occupied by Ben Jonson's verses in praise of the portrait of Shakespeare on the title-page. It contains thirty-six of the thirty-seven plays commonly ascribed to Shakespeare (*Pericles* being omitted), arranged, as in the majority of modern editions, under the heads of "Comedies," "Histories," and "Tragedies." These three divisions are paged separately, but have no special headings, except in the table of contents, in which *Troilus and Cressida* is omitted.

Of the thirty-six plays in the volume it will be seen that only sixteen had been already published in quarto. The other twenty, including many of the best works of Shakespeare, were these: *The Tempest*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *As You Like It*, *All 's Well That Ends Well*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Winter's Tale*, *King John*, the three Parts of *Henry VI.*, *Henry VIII.*, *Coriolanus*, *Timon of Athens*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Cymbeline*.

The typographical execution of the volume demands particular attention, on account of the confused and contradictory descriptions of it given by some of the editors and commentators and the use that the Baconians have made of it.

According to Donnelly and the Baconians generally, the folio was *edited by Bacon*, being a collection of his plays carefully revised, corrected, and



put into the shape in which he desired to hand them down to posterity.

Shakespearian critics, on the other hand, assume that the folio is just what it purports to be—a collection of the plays supposed to be written by William Shakespeare, made seven years after his death by two of his fellow-actors, who had no skill or experience in editing, and whose share in bringing out the book appears to have been limited to putting into the hands of the publishers the best copies of the plays they could get; these being partly manuscripts used in the theatre, and partly the earlier quarto editions of single plays, which had also been used by the actors in learning their parts. These critics believe that internal evidence shows, beyond the possibility of doubt, that the plays in the folio could not have been carefully revised or seen through the press by any person who had had experience in editing, printing, or publishing. That Francis Bacon could have edited them or supervised their publication is inconceivable—except to a fool or a Baconian.

The typographical execution of the volume, according to Collier (as quoted by Donnelly) “does credit to the age,” being “on the whole, remarkably accurate.” He adds: “So desirous were the editors and printers of correctness that they introduced changes for the better even while the sheets were in progress through the press.” These corrections, however, are few and far between, and they are

mostly of such palpable errors of the type as might catch the eye of the printer while working off the sheets. It should be understood, moreover, that Collier, like other Shakespeare editors, assumes that the folio had no editing worthy the name, and that the "copy" furnished to the printers was mutilated manuscripts and poorly-printed quarto editions used in the theatre. The typographical faults and defects of the volume were due to the "copy" rather than to the printer.

Craik, in his *English of Shakespeare*, says: "As a typographical production it is better executed than the common run of the English popular printing of that date. It is rather superior, for instance, in point of appearance, and very decidedly in correctness, to the second folio, produced nine years later. Nevertheless, it is obviously, to the most cursory inspection, very far from what would now be called even a tolerably-printed book. There is probably not a page in it which is not disfigured by many minute inaccuracies and irregularities, such as never appear in modern printing. The punctuation is throughout rude and negligent, even where it is not palpably blundering. The most elementary proprieties of the metrical arrangement are violated in innumerable passages. In some places the verse is printed as plain prose; elsewhere prose is ignorantly and ludicrously exhibited in the guise of verse. Indisputable and undisputed errors are of frequent occurrence, so gross that it is impossible they could

have been passed over, at any rate in such numbers, if the proof-sheets had undergone any systematic revision by a qualified person, however rapid. They were probably read in the printing-office, with more or less attention, when there was time, and often, when there was any hurry or pressure, sent to press with little or no examination. Everything betokens that editor or editing of the volume, in any proper or distinctive sense, there could have been none. The only editor was manifestly the head workman in the printing-office."

Craik goes on to state some of the evidences which a "closer inspection" reveals that the volume not only had no proper editing, but was put in type from imperfect "copy" obtained from the theatre. There are errors which cannot "be sufficiently accounted for as the natural mistakes of the compositor," and which "can only be explained on the supposition that he had been left to depend upon a manuscript which was imperfect, or which could not be read." It is a significant fact that "deformities of this kind are apt to be found accumulated at one place; there are, as it were, nests or eruptions of them; they run into constellations; showing that the manuscript had there got torn or soiled, or that the printer had been obliged to supply what was wanting in the best way he could, by his own invention or conjectural ingenuity."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>In an article on "The Text of Shakespeare" in *The North British Review* for February, 1854, Craik has shown

But the case of the folio is in some respects even worse than Craik makes it out. He says, for example, that "in one instance at least we have actually the names of the actors by whom the play was performed prefixed to their portions of the dialogue, instead of those of the *dramatis personæ*;" and that this "shows very clearly the text of the play in which it occurs (*Much Ado About Nothing*) to have been taken from the playhouse copy, or what is called the prompter's book." In this play, a stage direction in ii. 3 reads thus in the folio: "*Enter Prince, Leonato, Claudio, and Iacke Wilson.*" Jack Wilson was evidently the singer who took the part of Balthasar. Again, in iv. 2, we find "*Kemp*" nine times and "*Kem.*" three times prefixed to Dogberry's speeches, and "*Cowley*" twice and "*Couley*" once to the speeches of Verges. William Kemp (see page 351) and Richard Cowley are known to have been actors of the time in London.

There are other instances of the kind apparently not known to Craik. In 3 *Henry VI*, i. 2, we find, "*Enter Gabriel,*" instead of "*Enter Messenger,*" and "*Gabriel*" is the prefix to the speech that follows. Again, in iii. 1, of the same play, we read "*Enter Sinklo and Humfrey, with Crossebowes in their hands,*" where the modern editions have "*Enter*

that the number of readings in the folio which "must be admitted to be clearly wrong, or in the highest degree suspicious, probably amounts to not less than twenty on a page, or about twenty thousand in the whole volume."

*two Keepers,*" etc.; and in the dialogue following we have "*Sink.*" five times, "*Sinklo*" twice, and "*Sin.*" once for the 1st Keeper, and "*Hum.*" eight times for the 2d Keeper. The same Sinklo appears also in *The Taming of the Shrew*, scene 1 of induction, "*Sincklo*" being the prefix to the speech of one of the Players ("I think 'twas Soto," etc.). The 1600 Quarto of 2 *Henry IV.* has also, in v. 4, "*Enter Sincklo and three or foure officers.*" He was evidently an actor of subordinate parts, and nothing else is known of him except that he played in *The Seven Deadly Sins* and in *The Malcontent* in 1604. In the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, v. 1, the folio has "*Tawyer with a Trumpet before them*" where the actors in the clowns' interlude first enter. Collier, Grant White, Dyce, and others suspected *Tawyer* to be the name of the actor who filled the part of "presenter" and introduced the characters of the play; and it has been proved that they were right.

There is another class of irregularities in the folio which I do not remember to have seen classified, though the separate facts are referred to by many editors. *The Tempest*, the first play in the volume, is divided throughout into acts and scenes. We have "*Actus primus, Scena prima,*" "*Scena Secunda,*" "*Actus Secundus. Scena Prima,*" and so on to the end. The next three plays, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Measure for Measure*, are similarly divided. Then come five plays divided only into *acts*, though the

first heading in two of them is "*Actus primus, Scena prima*" — *The Comedy of Errors, Much Ado, Love's Labour's Lost, A Midsummer-Night's Dream, and The Merchant of Venice. As You Like It*, which follows, has acts and scenes. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, the induction is not marked, the play beginning with "*Actus primus. Scena Prima.*" The next heading is "*Actus Tertia*" [sic] in the proper place; and further on we find "*Actus Quartus. Scena Prima,*" and "*Actus Quintus.*" *All's Well* is divided only into acts; *The Winter's Tale* into acts and scenes. The "Histories" are all divided in full, except *Henry V.* (acts), 1 *Henry VI.* (decidedly "mixed"), 2 *Henry VI.* and 3 *Henry VI.* (not divided at all). In 1 *Henry VI.*, acts i. and ii. are not divided into scenes; act iii. is rightly divided; "*Actus Quartus. Scena prima.*" covers the first four scenes of act iv.; "*Scena secunda*" corresponds to scene 1 of act v.; "*Scena Tertia*" includes scenes 2, 3, and 4; and only the fifth scene is put under the heading "*Actus Quintus.*"

Of the "Tragedies," *Coriolanus, Titus Andronicus,* and *Julius Cæsar* are divided only into acts; *Macbeth, Lear, Othello,* and *Cymbeline,* into acts and scenes; *Troilus and Cressida, Romeo and Juliet, Timon of Athens,* and *Antony and Cleopatra,* into neither. In *Hamlet*, three scenes of act i. and two of act ii. are marked, the remainder of the play having no division whatever.

The only plays in the folio which have lists of

*dramatis personæ* (in every instance at the end) are *The Tempest*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Winter's Tale*, *2 Henry IV.*, *Timon of Athens*, and *Othello*. In *2 Henry IV.* and *Timon* a full page, with ornamental headpiece and tailpiece, is given to this list of "The Actors Names." The omission in the twenty-nine other plays cannot be due to want of space, as an examination of the book will show. In several instances an entire page is left blank at the end of a play.

The wretched editing — or want of editing — in the folio is also shown in the retention of matter for which the author had substituted a revised version. We can easily see how this might result from the use of old stage manuscripts for "copy" in the printing-office. The revised passages were inserted in the manuscript, but the original form was allowed to remain. It may have been retained for the benefit of an actor who had already learned it, the later and longer version being the one which a new actor would learn. The two may have been distinguished by arbitrary marks in the margin, intelligible to the actors, but liable to be overlooked or misinterpreted by the compositor.

A notable example of such duplication of matter occurs in *Love's Labour's Lost*, iv. 3 (see page 163 above). In this instance the blunder of the compositor was committed in "setting up" the quarto of 1598, which, as the repetition of sundry typographical errors proves, was used as "copy" for

the folio. The title-page of the quarto describes the play as “newly corrected and augmented,” and there are many indications of revision besides the one mentioned.

Again, in the last scene of *Timon of Athens*, the epitaph of the misanthrope reads thus (except in spelling) in the folio: —

“Here lies a wretched corse, of wretched soul bereft;  
Seek not my name. A plague consume you wicked  
    caitiffs left!  
Here lie I, Timon, who, alive, all living men did hate;  
Pass by and curse thy fill, but pass and stay not here thy  
    gait.”

We have here the *two* epitaphs given in North’s *Plutarch* as follows: —

“Now it chanced so, that the sea getting in, it compassed his tomb round about, that no man could come to it; and upon the same was written this epitaph: —

“‘Here lies a wretched corse, of wretched soul bereft:  
Seek not my name: a plague consume you wicked  
    wretches left.’

It is reported that Timon himself when he lived made this epitaph; for that which is commonly rehearsed was not his, but made by the poet Callimachus: —

“‘Here lie I, Timon, who alive all living men did hate:  
Pass by and curse thy fill; but pass, and stay not here thy  
    gait.’”



Shakespeare cannot have meant to use both epitaphs. He seems to have written both in the manuscript while hesitating between them, and afterwards to have neglected to strike one out.

The printing of words and phrases from foreign languages in the folio indicates wretched editing or proof-reading, or both. Latin is given with tolerable accuracy, though we meet with *cruces* like that in *Love's Labour's Lost*, i. 1, where Holofernes is represented as saying: "Bome boon for boon *prescian*, a little scratcht, 'twil serue." This is in reply to Nathaniel's "*Laus deo, bene intelligo*," which Theobald conjectures to be misprinted for "*Laus deo, bone, intelligo*;" with the response: "*Bone!* — *bone* for *bene!* Priscian a little scratched; 'twill serve;" that is, Holofernes takes Nathaniel's *bone* (which *he* means to be the vocative of the adjective) as a slip for *bene*, the adverb — which is natural enough, *bene intelligo* being a common phrase. Some editors, however, retain the *bene intelligo* in the preceding speech, and put the reply of Holofernes into *French*, thus: "*Bon, bon, fort bon, Priscian!*" etc. But the pedant does not elsewhere use *French*, and *Latin* would be more natural here.

*French*, *Spanish*, and *Italian* are almost invariably misprinted in the folio, sometimes ridiculously so. In the *Merry Wives*, for instance (i. 4), "*un boitier vert*" appears as "*unboyteene vert*;" and "*Ma foi, il fait fort chaud: je m'en vais a la cour — la grande affaire*" (Rowe's emendation), as "*mai foy,*

*il fait fort chando, Je man voi a le Court la Grand affaires ;*” and “*un garçon*” (v. 5) as “*oon garsoon*.” In *Henry V.* (iv. 5) “*O Seigneur ! le jour est perdu, tout est perdu !*” is perverted into “*O sigueur le iour et perdia, toute et perdie*.” The Italian *capocchia* of *Troilus and Cressida* (iv. 2) becomes *chipochia* ; “*mercatante*,” in *The Taming of the Shrew* (iv. 2), “*marcantant* ;” and in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* (iv. 2) “*Venetia, Venetia, chi non ti vede non ti pretia*” (as it appears in Howell’s *Letters* and in some modern editions, though others give it somewhat differently) is rendered “*vemchie, vencha, que non te vnde, que non te perreche*,” which exactly follows the quarto of 1598, showing that neither the folio printer nor the editor or proof-reader made any attempt to correct the fearful distortion of the Venetian proverb in the earlier edition used as “copy.” Whether the “*Fortuna delarguar*” of the same play (v. 2) is corrupt Spanish for *fortuna de la guerra*, or *del agua*, or *de la guarda*, the editors cannot decide ; but it is probably the first, though it does not exactly suit the context.

It would take too much space to illustrate, even in this brief way, all the faults and defects of the folio, regarded solely from the printer’s or proof-reader’s point of view, but the facts already given are certainly enough to show that the book had no editing worthy of the name. Heming and Condell doubtless did the work as well as they could, but not as Shakespeare, if he had lived, would have done

it, or as Bacon, if the book had been his, would have done it.

The folio contains a dedicatory letter addressed thus: —

*“To the Most Noble and Incomparable Paire of Brethren. VVilliam, Earle of Pembroke, &c. Lord Chamberlaine to the Kings most Excellent Maiesty. and Philip, Earle of Montgomery, &c. Gentleman of his Maiesties Bed-Chamber. Both Knights of the most Noble Order of the Garter, and our singular good Lords.”*

The dedication is followed by the preface of the player-editors, which is partly as follows: —

“It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to have bene wished, that the Author himselfe had liv'd to have set forth and overseen his owne writings; But since it hath bin ordain'd otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envie his Friends, the office of their care, and paine, to have collected and publish'd them; and so to have publish'd them, as where (before) you were abus'd with diverse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of injurious impostors, that expos'd them: even those, are now offer'd to your view cur'd, and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers as he conceived them. Who, as he was a happie imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His mind and hand went together: And what he thought, he uttered with that easinesse, that wee have scarce received from him a blot in his papers.”

Next comes "The Names of the principal Actors in all these Plays," twenty-six in number, headed by "William Shakespeare" and "Richard Burbadge." The editors, "John Hemmings" and "Henry Condell," are also included in the list.

Then follow commendatory poems by Ben Jonson, Leonard Digges, "I. M." (probably James Mabbe, a fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, described by Anthony Wood as "a learned man, good author, and a facetious conceited wit"), and Hugh Holland (a Welshman, fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and author of some poor verse).

The second folio (1632) was a reprint of the first, with few changes for the better except (as Prof. C. Alphonso Smith, of the Louisiana State University, has shown in the *Leipsic Englische Studien* for Dec. 1901) in *syntactical* corrections, the majority of which "are to be found in the concord of subject and predicate, and especially in the change of a singular predicate into the plural."

The commendatory poems of the first folio are reprinted, with three additional poems. The first, which is anonymous, reads thus:—

*"Upon the effigies of my worthy friend, the author, Master  
William Shakespeare and his works.*

Spectator, this Life's Shaddow is; To see  
The truer image and a livelier be  
Turne Reader. But, observe his Comicke vaine,  
Laugh, and proceed next to a Tragicke straine,

Then weepe ; So when thou find'st two contraries,  
 Two different passions from thy rapt soule rise,  
 Say (who alone effect such wonders could)  
 Rare *Shake-speare* to the life thou dost behold."

The second is Milton's well-known "Epitaph on the admirable dramatic poet, W. Shakespeare." The third is a much longer piece (77 lines), of great merit, "On worthy Master Shakespeare and his poems," signed "The friendly admirer of his endowments, I. M. S.," who has not been positively identified. No poet or other person of that time whose initials were I. M. S. is known who could have written the lines. They have been ascribed to Chapman, to "John Marston (Student)," to "Jasper Mayne (Student)," and "John Milton (Senior)," or "John Milton (Student)." It has also been suggested that the initials stand for, "In Memoriam Scriptoris."

The third folio, a reprint of the second with few variations of any value or interest, was first published in 1663. It was re-issued the next year with this statement on the title-page: "Unto this impression is added seven Playes never before printed in folio, viz.: *Pericles, Prince of Tyre. The London Prodigall. The History of Thomas Ld. Cromwell. Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham. The Puritan Widow. A Yorkshire Tragedy. The Tragedy of Locrine.*" *Pericles* (see page 454 above) is the only one of these plays in which Shakespeare could have had any hand.

The fourth folio (1685) was a reprint of that of 1664 (including the seven plays just mentioned), with the spelling somewhat modernized but no other change.

MODERN EDITIONS. — After the publication of the fourth folio in 1685 no collected edition of Shakespeare's works appeared until 1709, when Nicholas Rowe's, in six octavo volumes, was brought out. It followed the text of the fourth folio, the plays being arranged in the same order. The poems were not included. A second edition was issued in 1714, in eight volumes, and a ninth volume containing the poems was added. Rowe made some corrections of the text, and modernized the spelling and punctuation, besides prefixing a list of *dramatis personæ* to each play. His *Life of Shakespeare*, which appeared in this edition, has been described above (page 8).

Among other complete editions that are of any critical value, the following may be named: A. Pope's (6 vols., 1723-25; other eds. in 1728, 1735, and 1768); Louis Theobald's (7 vols., 1733; other eds. in 1740, 1752, etc.); Sir Thomas Hanmer's (6 vols., 1744); Bishop Warburton's (8 vols., 1747); Dr. Samuel Johnson's (8 vols., 1765); Edward Capell's (10 vols., 1768); George Steevens's revision of Johnson's ed. (10 vols., 1773; 2d ed. 1778); Isaac Reed's revision of the preceding (10 vols., 1785); Edmund Malone's (10 vols., 1790); Steevens's with Boydell's illustrations (9 vols., 1802; in

parts, 1791-1802); Reed's (first ed. with his name, 21 vols., 1803; 2d ed. 1813); Alexander Chalmers's 10 vols., 1805); the *Variorum of 1821*, edited by James Boswell from a corrected copy left by Malone (21 vols.); S. W. Singer's (10 vols., 1826); Charles Knight's Pictorial ed. (8 vols., 1838-43); J. P. Collier's (8 vols., 1842-44; 2d ed. 6 vols., 1858); G. C. Verplanck's (3 vols., 1844-47); H. N. Hudson's (11 vols., 1851-56); J. O. Halliwell's, afterward Halliwell-Phillipps's (16 vols. folio, 1853-65; only 150 copies printed); Singer's 2d ed. (10 vols., 1856); R. Grant White's (12 vols., 1857-66); Alexander Dyce's (6 vols., 1857; 2d ed. 9 vols., 1864-67; 3d ed. 9 vols., 1875); Howard Staunton's (3 vols., 1858-60); the Cambridge ed., by W. G. Clark and W. Aldis Wright (9 vols., 1863-66; 2d ed., by W. A. Wright, 1891-93); Charles and Mary Cowden-Clarke's ed. (3 vols., 1863-66); W. J. Rolfe's (40 vols., 1870-83; Friendly ed. 20 vols., 1884); Horace Howard Furness's *New Variorum* ed. (13 vols. issued, 1871-1901); Clarke and Wright's Globe ed. (the standard for line-numbers, 1874); H. N. Hudson's Harvard ed. (20 vols., 1880-81); R. G. White's Riverside ed. (6 vols., 1883); the Henry Irving ed., by Sir Henry Irving and F. A. Marshall (8 vols., 1888-90); the Bankside ed., by Appleton Morgan *et al.* (20 vols., including the twenty plays of which early quartos exist, 1888-92); the Temple ed., by Israel Gollancz (40 vols., 1894-96; reprinted later in 12 vols.); the Leopold

ed. (1 vol., 1877, with Delius's text, and a biographical and critical introduction by F. J. Furnivall); W. J. Craig's Oxford ed. (1 vol., 1894); C. H. Herford's Eversley ed. (10 vols., 1899).

Editions of single plays and series of plays (mostly for educational use) are too numerous to be catalogued here. The Clarendon Press and Rugby series, and Charles Wordsworth's *Shakespeare's Historical Plays* (3 vols., 1883), are noteworthy among those which have some critical value. *Shakespeare's Comedies*, illustrated by E. A. Abbey (4 vols., 1896), deserves special commendation.

The POEMS and SONNETS are included in most of the recent standard editions. The first complete edition of both was issued in 1709 (see page 221 above). An incomplete edition appeared in 1640 (page 221). The SONNETS were first collected in 1609 (page 328). The best modern edition is Edward Dowden's larger ed. (1881). Another important one is Thomas Tyler's (1890). G. Wyndham's *Poems of Shakespeare* (1898) is also valuable.

The first complete American edition of the works (with life, glossary, and notes by Dr. Johnson) was published in 8 vols. in 1795-96, at Philadelphia. The first Boston edition (including only the plays) was in 8 vols., 1802-04. Three editions of this appeared, each reset, stereotyping being then unknown. An edition in 17 vols. was published at Philadelphia in 1809, and one in 7 vols. (edited by O. W. B. Peabody, though his name does not appear



in it) in Boston in 1836 (reprints of Reed's text had been issued in 1813 and 1814). An edition of the plays in 10 vols. (Reed's text) appeared in New York in 1821, and again in 1824. The first American edition of the SPURIOUS AND DOUBTFUL PLAYS was published at New York, in 1848.

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1893); and *Old Shrines and Ivy* (1894); F. S. Boas, *Shakespeare and His Predecessors* (1895); A. W. Ward's *History of English Dramatic Literature* (revised ed. 1899); J. Walter's *Shakespeare's True Life* (1890; copiously illustrated, but not always trustworthy); W. J. Rolfe, *Shakespeare the Boy* (1896); H. Snowden Ward's *Shakespeare's Town and Times* (illustrated, 1896); John Leyland's *Shakespeare Country* (illustrated, 1900); Sidney Lee's *Life of Shakespeare* (1898; also in abridged form, 1899); H. W. Mabie's *William Shakespeare* (1901); Georg Brandes, *William Shakespeare* (English translation, 1898; of unequal merit); Mrs. C. C. Stopes, *Shakespeare's Warwickshire Contemporaries* (1897) and *Shakespeare's Family* (1901).

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A. Schmidt, *Shakespeare Lexicon* (2d ed. 1886); Dyce's *Glossary* (vol. ix. of ed. of Shakespeare published separately); R. Nares, *Glossary* (revised ed. 1859); Charles and Mary Cowden-Clarke, *Shakespeare Key* (1879); J. Bartlett, *Concordance to Shakespeare* (1895; includes both plays and poems, and supersedes all earlier works of its class); Mrs. H. H. Furness, *Concordance to the Poems of Shakespeare* (1874; gives every instance of every word); E. A. Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar* (1873); W. S. Walker's *Shakespeare's Versification* (1854) and *Critical Examination of Text of Shakespeare* (1860);

A. J. Ellis's *Early English Pronunciation* (part iii published separately); E. Dowden's *Shakspeare Primer* (1877; small, but invaluable), or his *Introduction to Shakespeare* (1894); *The Shakespeare Library* (for the sources of the plays; revised ed. 6 vols., 1875); W. G. B. Stone, *Shakspeare's Holinshed* (for English historical sources, 1896); W. W. Skeat, *Shakespeare's Plutarch* (for sources of Roman plays, 1875); L. Booth's facsimile reprint of *Folio of 1623* (1864), or H. Staunton's photo-lithographic reproduction of the same (1866), and the Griggs facsimiles of the early quartos, valuable for the original texts (for twenty of the plays see also Bankside ed. of Shakespeare); F. Douce, *Illustrations of Shakespeare* (1807; new ed. 1839); G. L. Craik, *The English of Shakespeare* (American ed. by W. J. Rolfe, 1867); H. P. Stokes, *Chronological Order of Shakespeare's Plays* (1878); T. F. T. Dyer, *Folk-lore of Shakespeare* (American ed. 1884); H. N. Ellacombe, *Plant-lore of Shakespeare* (1878; new ed. 1896); J. E. Harting, *Ornithology of Shakespeare* (1871); E. Phipson, *Animal-lore of Shakespeare* (1883); D. H. Madden, *The Diary of Master William Silence* (a "study of Shakespeare and Elizabethan Sport," 1897); Lord Campbell, *Shakespeare's Legal Acquirements* (1859); F. F. Heard, *Shakespeare as a Lawyer* (1883); J. C. Bucknill, *Medical Knowledge of Shakespeare* (1860); and *Mad Folk of Shakespeare* (2d ed. 1867); C. Wordsworth, *Shakespeare's Knowledge of the Bible* (3d ed. 1880);

J. H. Morison, *Great Poets as Religious Teachers* (1886); *Shakespeare Sermons*, preached at Stratford (1901); W. A. Wright, *Bible Word-book* (2d ed. 1884; contains many illustrations from Shakespeare); J. P. Norris, *Portraits of Shakespeare* (1885; exhaustive); A. Roffe, *Handbook of Shakespeare Music* (1875); fuller treatment in *List of Songs, etc., by Shakspere, set to Music*, published by New Shakspere Society, (1884); E. W. Naylor, *Shakespeare and Music* (1896); L. C. Elson, *Shakespeare in Music* (1901); S. Hartmann, *Shakespeare in Art* (1901). The *Papers* of the Shakespeare Society (1844-49) and the *Transactions* and other publications of the New Shakspere Society (from 1874 onward) contain much valuable textual, critical, and illustrative matter.

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litt, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* (1817; new ed. by Bohn, with the *Lectures on Age of Elizabeth*, 1870); E. Dowden, *Shakspeare: his Mind and Art* (American ed. 1881); H. N. Hudson, *Life, Art, and Characters of Shakespeare* (revised ed. 1882); R. G. White, *Shakespeare's Scholar* (1854) and *Studies in Shakespeare* (1886); J. Weiss, *Wit, Humour, and Shakespeare* (1876); D. J. Snider, *System of Shakespeare's Dramas* (1877); Lady Martin, *Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters* (1884); L. Lewes, *Women of Shakespeare* (1895); Mrs. F. A. Kemble, *Notes on Shakespeare's Plays* (1882); R. G. Moulton, *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist* (3d ed. 1893); B. E. Warner, *English History in the Plays of Shakespeare* (1894); B. Wendell, *William Shakespeare* (1895); A. C. Swinburne, *Study of Shakespeare* (1880); T. P. Courtenay, *Commentaries on the Historical Plays of Shakespeare* (1840); J. W. Hales, *Essays and Notes on Shakespeare* (1892); B. Ten Brink, *Five Lectures on Shakespeare* (1895); G. G. Gervinus, *Shakespeare Commentaries*, translated by F. E. Bunnett (new ed. 1875); H. Ulrici, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*, translated by L. D. Schmitz (1876); H. Corson, *Introduction of Study to Shakespeare* (1899); T. R. Lounsbury, *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist* (1902); L. A. Sherman, *What is Shakespeare?* (1902).

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printed); L. M. Griffiths, *Evenings with Shakespere* (1889; very useful in Shakespeare reading-clubs); Charles and Mary Lamb, *Tales from Shakespeare* (many editions; one with notes by W. J. Rolfe, 2 vols., 1890); Mary Cowden-Clarke, *Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines* (best ed. 5 vols., 1891); C. M. Ingleby et al., *Shakespeare's Centurie of Prayse* (references to Shakespeare between 1591 and 1693; 2d ed. 1879, published by New Shakespere Society); M. R. Silsby, *Tributes to Shakespeare* (1892); W. Andrews, *Bygone Warwickshire* (1893); W. Black, *Judith Shakespeare* (1884; a novel, but a careful study of the scene and the times); J. Bennett, *Master Skylark* (1897); Imogen Clark, *Will Shakespeare's Little Lad* (1897); C. E. Phelps, *Falstaff and Equity* (1901); J. A. Symonds, *The Predecessors of Shakespeare* (new ed. 1900); E. J. Dunning, *Genesis of Shakespeare's Art* (1897); J. J. Jusserand, *The English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare* (1890), and *Shakespeare in France under the Ancien Régime* (1899); F. G. Fleay, *Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama, 1559-1642* (1891); W. H. Fleming, *How to Study Shakespeare* (2 vols. 1898, 1899), and *Shakespeare's Plots* (1902).

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*Collier's Shakespeare* (1860); S. W. Singer's *The Text of Shakespeare Vindicated, etc.* (1853); and C. M. Ingleby's *Complete View of the Shakespearian Controversy* (1861).

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## NOTES



## NOTES

PAGE 8. *Betterton the actor.* — Thomas Betterton was born in Westminster in 1635, and appeared on the stage at the Cockpit in Drury Lane in 1660. He attained to great eminence in his profession, but lost the first collection of his well-earned savings through a commercial enterprise in 1692. In 1700 he acted in Rowe's first tragedy, which may have led to his acquaintance with that dramatist. He died in London in April, 1710, having nearly completed his seventy-fifth year. The precise time of his visit to Stratford-on-Avon is unknown, but it is not likely to have occurred in his declining years.

PAGE 22. *Spenser's allusion.* — The quotation is from *Colin Clout's Come Home Again* (1594), and the entire passage reads thus :

“ And there, though last not least is *Aëtion*,  
A gentler shepherd may no where be found:  
Whose Muse, full of high thoughts invention,  
Doth like himself Heroically sound.”

Some have doubted whether the reference is to Shakespeare, but “no other heroic poet (that is, historical dramatist, or chronicler in heroic verse) had a surname of heroic sound.” Other writers have similar allusions to the poet's warlike name. *Aëtion* is a Greek proper name, borne by the father of Cypselus of Corinth and by

two famous artists. It is derived from *æerbs*, an eagle, and is therefore appropriate to one of "high thoughts" and heroic invention.

PAGE 39. *Garrick's Jubilee*. — This was a series of entertainments at Stratford in 1769 devised and arranged by Garrick, ostensibly to do honour to Shakespeare. The opening of the celebration having been duly announced in early morn by a cannonade, the lady visitors were serenaded in rotation by young men attired in fancy costume, and Garrick was presented by the corporation with a medal and a wand, both made from relics of the famous mulberry-tree. Then there were public feasts, more serenading, an oratorio at the church, elaborate processions, a masquerade, balls, illuminations, fireworks, horse-races, etc. Garrick also recited an ode in praise of the dramatist in a large wooden theatre that had been erected for the occasion on the Bancroft.

PAGE 40. *Designs of an unpatriotic character*. — The allusion is to the rumour that Barnum wanted to buy the Birthplace and remove it to this country.

PAGE 57. *Advanced her Bear*. — Alluding to the "bear and ragged staff," the badge of the Earls of Warwick.

PAGE 58. *Milton's "woodnotes wild"*. — Grant White and other critics who have found fault with this characterization of Shakespeare appear to have forgotten that it is his *comedies*, and especially the rural comedies (*As You Like It*, for example), that are referred to, and from the point of view of *L'Allegro*, the cheerful man, who goes to the theatre as on his morning walk, for innocent recreation, not as a dramatic critic.

Mr. Edwin Reed says: "Milton was a Puritan, and probably never soiled his fingers with a copy of these wicked works;" but Milton's familiarity with Shake-

speare is proved by many passages in his poems which are distinct echoes of the dramatist. That he knew and admired Shakespeare's works is, moreover, clear from his noble *Epitaph*, written some years earlier than *L'Allegro* and first printed in the Shakespeare folio of 1632.

PAGE 94. *The poaching tradition.* — Whether this tradition had any foundation in fact or not, we have abundant proof in even the earliest of Shakespeare's works that in his youth, if not later, he had some experience of country sports, such as hunting, hawking, coursing, fowling, and the like. The famous description of the horse in *Venus and Adonis* (259 fol.) shows his thorough knowledge of the animal; and the vivid sketch of hare-hunting in the same poem (679 fol.) must have been based on actual experience in the sport. Professor Baynes remarks: "Many of these sports were pursued by the local gentry and the yeomen together; and the poet, as the son of a well-connected burgess of Stratford, who had recently been mayor of the town and possessed estates in the county, would be well entitled to share in them, while his handsome presence and courteous bearing would be likely to ensure him a hearty welcome. . . . However this may be, it is clear from internal evidence that the poet was practically familiar with the field sports of his day."

His love for dogs and horses is illustrated by many passages in his works. There was never a more graphic description of hounds than he puts into the mouth of Theseus in the *Midsummer-Night's Dream* (iv. 1. 108 fol.): "My love shall hear the music of my hounds," etc. The talk of the hunters about the dogs in *The Taming of the Shrew* (ind. i. 16 fol.) is in the same vein.

In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (i. 1. 96 fol.) Page

defends his greyhound against the criticisms of Slender, and Shallow takes his part: —

*Slender.* How does your fallow greyhound, sir? I heard say he was outrun on Cotsall.

*Page.* It could not be judged, sir.

*Slender.* You 'll not confess, you 'll not confess.

*Shallow.* That he will not. — 'Tis your fault, 'tis your fault; 'tis a good dog.

*Page.* A cur, sir.

*Shallow.* Sir, he 's a good dog, and a fair dog: can there be more said? he is good and fair."

That Shakespeare was familiar with "Cotsall" — the Cotswold downs in Gloucestershire, celebrated for coursing and for other rural sports — has been shown by Mr. D. H. Madden (see page 513 above), as also the poet's "knowledge of the most intimate secrets of woodcraft and falconry, and, above all, of the nature and disposition of the horse." The same writer remarks: "Every lover of the horse who is a student of Shakespeare must have been struck by the number and appropriateness of his references to horses and to horsemanship;" and he shows that some passages that seem obscure become clear, and others gain a new significance when we get a thorough knowledge of the old-time language of the management and use of the animal.

Bacon, by the way, seems to have had no taste for sport and little knowledge of it. To him the country was

"a den  
Of savage men,"

as he calls it in the one piece of tolerable verse which he is said to have written, and which the Baconian heretics are in the habit of quoting to prove that he really was a poet.

PAGE 100. *The "Bidford challenge."*—That Shakespeare was a "teetotaller" of course no one supposes. He would not have refused to help the Puritan preacher (page 461) dispose of those quarts of sack and claret, and he may sometimes have drunk more than was good for him; but that he was intemperate, judged by the strictest standards of the time, I do not believe. Again and again he goes out of his way to denounce drunkenness and to show up its evil results, or to commend the opposite virtue with its wholesome fruits; and when moral lessons are introduced in that unnecessary manner by Shakespeare, we cannot doubt that they are introduced for their own sake. For example, the long speech of Hamlet (i. 4. 17 fol.) on the "heavy-headed revel" of the Danes has no direct bearing upon the action of the play. It is purely episodic, and its only conceivable *raison d'être* is its indirect moral significance. So in *As You Like It* (ii. 2. 47) when Adam says "Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty," there was no imaginable reason except this moral one for his adding:—

" For in my youth I never did apply  
Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood,  
Nor did not with unbashful forehead woo  
The means of weakness and debility;  
Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,  
Frosty, but kindly."

This is not said to Orlando, who was in no need of the admonition it involves, but to the London audience for whom the play was written; and it is Shakespeare who speaks, as surely as when he acted the part of Adam on the stage.

Similarly in *Twelfth Night* (i. 5. 123) Olivia asks Feste, "What 's a drunken man like, fool?" and he replies:

“Like a drowned man, a fool, and a madman. One draught above heat makes him a fool; the second mads him; and a third drowns him.”

Note also the comments of Cæsar on the drunken revel in *Antony and Cleopatra* (ii. 7. 95 fol.):—

“*Pompey*. This is not yet an Alexandrian feast.  
*Antony*. It ripens towards it.— Strike the vessels, ho!  
 Here is to Cæsar!  
*Cæsar*. I could well forbear 't.  
 It's monstrous labour, when I wash my brain,  
 And it grows fouler.  
*Antony*. Be a child o' the time.  
*Cæsar*. Possess it, I'll make answer;  
 But I had rather fast from all four days  
 Than drink so much in one.”

Even more striking, from the same point of view, is Cassio's bitter remorse for his drunkenness (*Othello*, ii. 3. 254 fol.) It is not so much the loss of his office that he laments as the personal degradation and disgrace:—

“*Cassio*. Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial. My reputation, Iago, my reputation!

*Iago*. As I am an honest man, I thought you had received some bodily wound; there is more sense in that than in reputation. . . .

*Cassio*. O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains! that we should, with joy, pleasance, revel, and applause, transform ourselves into beasts! . . .

*Iago*. Come, you are too severe a moraler. . . .

*Cassio*. I will ask him for my place again; he shall tell me I am a drunkard! Had I as many mouths as Hydra, such an answer would stop them all. To be now a sensible man, by and by a fool, and presently a beast! O, strange! Every inordinate cup is unblest, and the ingredient is a devil.”

No one who observes how much space is given to these self-reproaches of Cassio will regard them as the mere conventional work of a playwright on a minor incident of his plot. There is a deeper ethical meaning in them.



PAGE 100. *John Jordan*. — He will be chiefly remembered for his forgery of the so-called "will" of John Shakespeare;<sup>1</sup> but his *Original Collections on Shakespeare and Stratford-on-Avon* and *Historical Accounts of the Families of Shakespeare and Hart* (both published about 1780) contain much other matter that is more or less suspicious.

Other Shakespearian forgeries that have been the source of no little trouble and vexation to biographers and editors may be briefly mentioned here. In 1796 William Henry Ireland published a volume of forged matter under the title of *Miscellaneous Papers and Legal Instruments under the Hand and Seal of William Shakespeare*, etc. His father, Samuel Ireland, seems to have been a partner in the fraud. The son wrote a tragedy in blank verse, entitled *Vortigern*, which he pretended to have found among the dramatist's manuscripts. It was produced at Drury Lane Theatre and afterwards printed. The forgeries were exposed by Malone, and young Ireland in 1805 acknowledged them in his *Confessions*.

John Payne Collier, an editor and critic who had done much excellent work on Shakespeare, was guilty of a series of forgeries between 1835 and 1849 which for a time deceived many of his critical contemporaries, but were subsequently exposed by Hamilton, Ingleby, Wheatley, and others. For a list of the more important of the forged papers, see the appendix to the *Life* of the drama-

<sup>1</sup> This was really what purported to be a long confession of faith, dictated (for it could not have been written) by "John Shakespear, an unworthy member of the Holy Catholick religion." According to Jordan in 1784, "it was found by Mr. Joseph Mosely, a bricklayer of this town [Stratford] some years ago under the tileing of the house where the poet was born." Investigations made by Malone and others proved beyond a doubt that it was spurious.

tist in vol. i. of Dyce's third edition of Shakespeare, or Sidney Lee's *Life of Shakespeare* (pp. 367-369). For fuller information the books mentioned in the Bibliography (p. 516 above) may be consulted.

PAGE 105. *Shakespeare and the Puritans*.—Shakespeare's allusions to the Puritans are few and slight. In *All's Well* (i. 3. 56, 98) the Clown says, in substance, that both Puritan and Papist are liable to be cuckolded, and again that "honesty" is "no Puritan." In *The Winter's Tale* (iv. 3. 46) the Clown refers to the psalm-singing of Puritans. The passage in *Pericles* (iv. 6. 9), "She would make a Puritan of the devil," is not Shakespeare's. In *Twelfth Night* (ii. 3. 152) Malvolio is not meant to be a Puritan, as many editors and commentators have assumed. Maria says that "sometimes he is a kind of Puritan," that is, somewhat like a Puritan; but when Andrew and Toby take her to mean that he is one, she denies it: "The devil a Puritan that he is, or anything constantly but a time-pleaser." In the same play (iii. 2. 34) Andrew says, "I had as lief be a Brownist as a politician." These are the only allusions to the sect in the plays, and they are all put into the mouths of clowns or a fool worse than the clowns. In 1 *Henry IV.* (ii. 4) Falstaff mimics a Puritan when he plays the part of the King lecturing Prince Hal. Malvolio never talks like one.

PAGE 129. *Richard Field*.—Another person with whom Shakespeare may have become acquainted during his early days in London was John Florio, the most celebrated teacher of Italian in that time. After leaving Magdalen College, Oxford, he lived for many years in London, engaged in teaching and in literary work, and was intimate with most of the eminent men of letters

and their noble patrons. The Earl of Southampton was one of his pupils in Italian, and to him (in connection with the Earl of Rutland and the Countess of Bedford) Florio, in 1598, dedicated his Italian-English dictionary entitled *A Worlde of Wordes*. After the accession of James he was made tutor to Prince Henry, and became the friend and favourite of Queen Anne, to whom he dedicated the second edition of the *Worlde of Wordes*.

PAGE 149. *Greene and Chettle*.—Most of the editors and commentators have followed Malone in assuming that Greene refers to Shakespeare both as an actor and as an author, and this may be admitted. It is generally agreed that “beautified with our feathers” alludes to acting, though some regard it as insinuating plagiarism; but “bombast out a blank verse” (which, taken by itself, might refer to declaiming verse on the stage) appears from the context to mean the *writing* of such verse. The words, “as the best of you,” are evidently addressed to the dramatists, who, though they may all have been actors at some time in their lives, are here viewed by Greene as authors. The “*Johannes Factotum*” also indicates that Shakespeare is alluded to in some other capacity than that of a mere actor.

The critics, almost without exception, believe that the “other” of the two persons who, as Chettle says, were offended by Greene’s attack, was Shakespeare, though the reference, on the face of it, seems to be to one of the three playwrights whom Greene addresses. Fleay believes that Chettle “apologizes for the offence given to Marlowe in the *Groatsworth of Wit*. To Peele he makes no apology, nor indeed was any required. Shakespeare

was not one of those who took offence; they are expressly stated to have been two of the three authors addressed by Greene, the third (Lodge) not being in England." Dr. Ingleby also doubts whether Chettle refers to Shakespeare, if we take his words as they stand. A writer in the *Athenæum* (February 7, 1874) contends that the two who took offence were Marlowe and Nash. He regards it as certain that "Shakespeare was not one of them."

A careful scrutiny of the whole passage, however, indicates that Shakespeare is the "other" one meant. The person is complimented first upon his *acting* (the interpretation that all give to "the qualitie he professes"), and the reference to his "facetious [felicitous] grace in *writing*" comes in at the end of the passage as a part of the credit accorded to him by "divers of worship." It is quite certain that Chettle would not refer in that way to Marlowe or any other of Greene's three dramatists, all of whom had established their reputation as authors. It would be damning *them* with faint praise, but it was no slight compliment to the 'prentice work of Shakespeare, who, after retouching old plays for the stage, was only just beginning to try his hand at original dramatic composition. The "qualitie he professes" clearly suggests that acting was the regular profession, or occupation, of the person referred to, and this was not true of Marlowe, Peele, or Lodge. At that time they would have regarded it as anything but a compliment to be included among the "puppets" at whom Greene had sneered as noteworthy merely for being "beautified with our feathers."

PAGE 150. *Quum inscrutabilia*, etc.—The misprint of "*Quum*" for "*Quam*" is probably in the original

work, as it appears in Halliwell-Phillipps's careful reprint, which is followed here.

PAGE 170. *The shortest of the plays.*—Writers on Shakespeare often give inaccurate and conflicting statements concerning the length of the plays. Sidney Lee, in his *Life of Shakespeare*, says that *Hamlet* is the longest "except *Antony and Cleopatra*, which exceeds it by sixty lines." *Hamlet* is almost 900 lines longer than *Antony and Cleopatra*, having 3930 lines ("Globe" numbering) while that has only 3063. This error dates back to Fleay's tables in the *Transactions of the New Shakspeare Society*, 1874-76, and was repeated in *Fleay's Manual*, 1878. He corrected it in 1881, but its frequent reappearance since that time illustrates the persistent vitality of misprints. Mr. Lee also says that *The Tempest* is the shortest of the plays except *Macbeth* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*; and elsewhere he calls *Macbeth* the "shortest of all Shakespeare's plays." *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* has 2294 lines, being longer than *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* (2180).

PAGE 197. *Lodge's poem.*—Baynes alludes to Lodge's tale of *Glaucus and Sylla*, which Professor Minto suggested as the probable model of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*. Lodge's poem was probably the earlier of the two, but I doubt whether Shakespeare was indebted to it.

PAGE 232. *Francis Meres.*—He was born in Lincolnshire in 1565, and died in 1647. He was a clergyman and author. He graduated at Pembroke College, Cambridge, became rector of Wing, Rutland, and kept school there. His *Palladis Tamia, or Wits Treasury* (1598) was his most important work. It contains notices of about 125 English authors, painters, musicians, etc.

PAGE 238. *Henry V.* — It is proper to state that portions of the comments on this play were originally contributed without my name to an edition of Shakespeare, published in England about fifteen years ago.

PAGE 295. *Value of money in Shakespeare's day.* — The purchasing power of money in the Elizabethan age is variously stated as from seven to twelve times what it is at present. Of course it varied much with different classes of commodities. Some articles cost as much in money then as now; others were much more than twelve times cheaper. Sidney Lee is probably about right in making the average value eight times what it is at present.

PAGE 386. *The trade of Noverint.* — The profession of law; alluding to the beginning of legal documents in Latin: "Noverint uiversi per presentes," etc. ("Know all men by these presents," etc.).

The "neck-verse" mentioned a few lines below refers to the old English "benefit of clergy," by which the clergy were exempted from criminal process before a secular judge. This privilege came to be extended, for many offences, to all laymen who could read; and their ability to read was tested by means of a verse from some Latin book.

PAGE 394. *S. E.* — That is, *Son Eminence*, or His Highness.

PAGE 468. *Quiney.* — The name was pronounced *Quin-ny*, not *Qui-ny*.

PAGE 472. *The document was signed.* — Aside from the three signatures of the poet on the sheets of his will, the only autographs of indisputable authenticity are his signatures to the indenture relating to the Blackfriars purchase in 1613 (see p. 460 above), and to the mort-

gage-deed connected with the same transaction. The former document is in the Guildhall Library, London, the latter in the British Museum. A copy of Florio's *Montaigne* in the Museum has Shakespeare's name on the fly-leaf, but whether he wrote it is uncertain. Another possible autograph was discovered in 1889 in a copy of North's *Plutarch* (1603) on a sheet of paper which had been used as a part of the filling of the back in binding the volume. It is in the Public Library, Boston, Mass.

PAGE 473. *Her rights of dower*. — Sidney Lee says: "Her right to a widow's dower — that is, to a third share for life in freehold estate — was not subject to testamentary disposition, but Shakespeare had taken steps to prevent her from benefiting — at any rate to the full extent — by that legal arrangement. He had barred her dower in the case of his latest purchase of freehold estate, namely, the house at Blackfriars. Such procedure is pretty conclusive proof that he had the intention of excluding her from the enjoyment of his possessions after his death." But the London property was a very small part of Shakespeare's real estate. Moreover, it was conveyed to Shakespeare and three other persons as joint tenants, and therefore, according to authority quoted by Mr. Lee, "the dower of Shakespeare's wife would be barred unless he were the survivor of the four bargainees," which "was a remote contingency," and Shakespeare "always retained the power of making another settlement when the trustees were shrinking." But if the dower had been absolutely barred in this particular instance, it cannot be regarded as "conclusive proof" that Shakespeare intended to exclude his wife from the enjoyment of his far more valuable possessions

in Stratford and its vicinity, concerning which no such bar was made.

Mr. Lee, however, thinks it probable that, so far as the poet may have barred the dower, it was because his wife's "ignorance of affairs and the infirmities of age (she was past sixty) combined to unfit her in his eyes for the care of property, and, as an act of ordinary prudence, he committed her to the care of his elder daughter," who seems to have inherited "some of his own shrewdness, and had a capable adviser in her husband."

PAGE 477. *A portrait of the poet.*—The bust and the engraved portrait in the folio of 1623, though both poor from an artistic point of view, are the only counterfeit presentments of the poet that can be ascribed to a time within a few years of his death. The folio portrait was the work of Martin Droeshout, who was only fourteen years old when Shakespeare died and twenty-one when he made the engraving. It is probable that he copied it from a painting, and that the latter is now in the Shakespeare Memorial at Stratford-on-Avon. Experts are confident that the painting is a work of the early part of the seventeenth century, and that it was anterior to the engraving, not based upon it. Nothing is known of its history previous to its discovery in 1840, but the critical evidence in its favour is remarkably strong. Artistically it is superior to the engraving.

Of the many other painted portraits the so-called "Ely House portrait," now in the Birthplace at Stratford, is the only other one that particularly resembles the Droeshout engraving or the bust on the monument. Another famous one is the "Chandos portrait," now in the National Portrait Gallery, London, which was once the property of Sir William Davenant. According to Oldys, it was



painted by Burbage the actor, but it is better than any authenticated painting by him. It varies in its details from the bust and the Droeshout engraving, and was probably painted some years after Shakespeare's death from descriptions given by persons who had known him, but was more or less influenced by the imagination of the artist.

The "Jansen portrait" has a history dating back to 1770, and is a pleasing picture, but quite unlike those of better authority; and the same may be said of the "Felton portrait," which is inscribed "Gul. Shakespear 1597, R. B." (Richard Bnrbage), but has no pedigree earlier than 1792.

A portrait bust of black terra-cotta was found in 1845 in a wall on the site of the Duke's Theatre in London, built by Davenant. It is supposed to have belonged to the theatre. It appears to be an idealized representation of the poet, based on the early portraits.

The Kesselstadt death-mask, found in a junk-shop in Mayence in 1849, is one that we could fain believe to have been taken from the poet's face, but the evidence in its favour is unfortunately insufficient.

For fuller information the curious reader may be referred to Sidney Lee's *Life*, and particularly to Mr. J. P. Norris's *Portraits of Shakespeare* (p. 514 above), the most complete and best illustrated of the special works on the subject.

PAGE 482. *He was an earnest Puritan.* — There is no doubt concerning Dr. Hall's religious views, but biographers and critics have differed widely concerning Shakespeare's. Davies (see p. 15) says that "he died a papist;" and Halliwell-Phillipps remarks: "That this was the local tradition does not admit of rational ques-

tion. . . . At the same time it is anything but necessary to conclude that the great dramatist had very strong or pronounced views on theological matters. If that were the case, it is almost certain that there would have been some other early allusion to them, and perhaps in himself less of that spirit of toleration for every kind of opinion which rendered him at home with all sorts and conditions of men,— as well as less of that freedom from inflexible preconceptions that might have affected the fidelity of his dramatic work. . . . Assuming, as we fairly may, that he had a leaning to the faith of his ancestors, we may yet be sure that the inclination was not of a nature that materially disturbed the easy-going acquiescence in the conditions of his surrounding world that added so much to the happiness of his later days.”

Books and essays have been written to prove that, as Davies had asserted, he was a Roman Catholic, a good Churchman, and an infidel. They prove at least that he was no narrow or bigoted sectarian who could be easily labelled. He was no infidel, and his Christianity was too broad to be measured by the foot-rule of any sect. His references to religious subjects seem to me proof of genuine religious feeling. He was no saint, and no preacher; but when he has occasion to deal with sacred things he shows a reverence and a depth of feeling which are evidently his own. They are not merely put into the mouths of his characters as in keeping therewith; they are subjective and sympathetic. In many instances they are not necessary to the character. We should not miss them if they were omitted, and an irreligious man would have omitted them — or, rather, they would not have occurred to him.

Whatever may have been Shakespeare's personal sins

or weaknesses, his moral convictions were always sound and healthy. On human duty he speaks with no uncertain accent. In his works there is no sophistical confusion of the distinctions between right and wrong. It is to be noted, moreover, that "he habitually contemplates human duty and the better human feelings as *sacred* things, and invests with sanctity the natural and instituted relations of life." The paramount duty of living for others is often set forth; but never perhaps more eloquently than in *Measure for Measure* (i. 1. 30-41), where the Duke is giving his commission to Angelo:—

"Thyself and thy belongings  
 Are not thine own so proper as to waste  
 Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee.  
 Heaven doth with us as we with torches do—  
 Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues  
 Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike  
 As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touch'd  
 But to fine issues; nor Nature never lends  
 The smallest scruple of her excellence  
 But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines  
 Herself the glory of a creditor,  
 Both thanks and use."

Henry Morley, in a criticism on *As You Like It*, speaks of Shakespeare's works as "a Lay Bible;" and they are such, he believes, not by chance, but of set purpose. He says: "Shakespeare never allows evil to be overcome with evil; he invariably shows evil overcome with good, the discords of life healed only by man's love to God and his neighbour. Love God; love your neighbour; do your work, making the active business of life subject to the commandments upon which hang all the law and the prophets—Shakespeare's works contain no lessons that are not subordinate to these. Of dogmatism

he is free, of the true spirit of religion he is full ; and it is for this reason that his works are a Lay Bible."

I may add what Keble, the saintly singer of *The Christian Year*, says of our poet in one of the lectures he delivered as professor of poetry at Oxford : " Recollect, I beseech you, how you each felt when you read these plays for the first time. Do you not remember that all along, as the drama proceeded, you were led to take the part of whatever good and worthy characters it contained ; and more especially, when you reached the end and closed the book, you felt that your inmost heart had received a stimulus which was calculated to urge you on to virtue ; and to virtue not merely such as is apt, without much reality, to warm and excite the feelings of the young, but such as consists in the actual practice of a stricter, purer, more upright, more industrious, more religious life ? We need not hesitate, therefore, to conclude that he favoured virtue from his very soul ; more especially when we consider how widely different is the case with most of his contemporaries who devoted themselves, as he did, to writing for the stage."

PAGE 493. *John Heming*. — The name also appears in documents of the time as *Hemings* or *Hemmings* (see pages 298 and 325 above). In the folio we find *Heminge* in the signatures to the dedication and the preface, but *Hemmings* in the list of "the principall actors in all these playes."

I may add that in quotations, as a rule, I have followed the original 'spelling of Shakespeare's name and that of other proper names, titles of books, etc. In old letters, documents, etc., I have followed the best accessible authorities.

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